

# *IRISH Writing*

THE MAGAZINE  
OF CONTEMPORARY  
IRISH LITERATURE

**20-21**

EDITED BY  
DAVID MARCUS & TERENCE SMITH

20★

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# IRISH WRITING

EDITED BY

DAVID MARCUS and TERENCE SMITH

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NOVEMBER, 1952

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## PASTURES NEW

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While there is no great reason for making more of the twenty-first than of the twentieth issue of a magazine—here, anyhow, we have incorporated both—one is glad to seize on any excuse for being *en fête*, and so in this double issue we are happy to celebrate a sort of coming of age of *Irish Writing*. It serves also to mark a stage in our editorial time-journey—a convenient halt at which the travellers may descend from their Bianconi car or *fiacre* (surely the more Irish vehicle) to stretch themselves and look around.

On doing so, we find that we have journeyed not only through time, but also, in a sense, through space. What does it portend that of the nine stories published here, those of three writers, Sean O'Faolain, Arthur Power, and K. Arnold Price, introduce us to a Continental metropolis, while in the extract given from Francis Stuart's work in progress, the background is recognisably London? Nor is this all. Myles na gCopaleen's Donabate is, we are made to feel, a town at the World's End. And two newcomers, Sean Lucy and John O'Donoghue, each in his own way, set the horns of Elfland not at all too faintly blowing. Only in the remaining stories, by Frank O'Connor and Liam O'Flaherty, do we find the home scene still wonderfully in view.

To us, at any rate, this is an exceedingly cheering distribution of interest. Admitting that a writer may, in a manner of speaking, wander too far from his native field, is he not just as likely to be in danger through over-cultivation not so much of his native field as of the *same* field? In much of the "creative" writing coming from Ireland today there is more than a suggestion of over-tillage.

In a book-review in this issue Cecil Salkeld points to the Elizabethan richness of Irish literature at all times. Strange indeed that with so much continuing richness, there is so little publishing enterprise, so little ability to garner the present output. With all the makings of a bazaar—not of the charitable kind!—we have but a few stalls. *Irish Writing*, therefore, has never allowed itself to be too *special*—in the manner of so many "little reviews". It is true that some of these played a splendid part in promoting the first stirrings of much of what is vital in contemporary literature, but in Ireland at the present day too great a specialisation in publishing would appear to be a luxury out of place. Like those "little reviews", however, we have published again and again the work of the talented unknown. We have tried to avoid the pretentious and the precious, though not, we hope, the unusual. We have avoided trends. And we think we have given some indication of the bounty, the persistent vitality and scope of Irish writing.

THE EDITORS.

# PERSPECTIVES

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To be published quarterly by Intercultural Publications Inc., New York, *Perspectives* will bring to readers in the rest of the world a generous cross-section of contemporary American writing, criticism, and art. Each issue will appear in four editions—English, German, French, and Italian—and will be composed largely of material reprinted from a wide variety of American books and magazines. The selections for each issue will be made by a different, distinguished American critic.

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196 pp., 8 in full color, 2s. 6d. per copy. Annual subscription: 12s.

Individual copies and annual subscriptions to *Perspectives* may be obtained through your bookseller. The British edition is published by Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 90 Great Russell St., London, W.C.1., to whom all enquiries should be addressed.

### AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

WHEN GEORGIE CANTY SAW LOUIS GOLDEN AT THE CUSTOMS COUNTER of the airport he muttered 'Bastard!' under his breath: which was what he hoped most people in Ireland thought of Mister Louis Bloody Well Golden, editor of *The Daily Crucifix*, 'Ireland's One and Only Catholic Daily'—and one too many at that!

Georgie's eyes closed, his mouth zipped tight. His duodenal walked slowly all round his waist with spiked boots. It stuck a red-hot sword in through his navel. It pulled his liver out through his ribs. His eyes closed in agony. . . .

He lifted his eyelids and his eyes swivelled down the counter-length at Golden—at his long neck like a heron, his little rabbit's puss with the two white teeth like a nutria, the hunched shoulders of a constipated stork, and the same soapy grin for the Customs officer that he probably switched on whenever he'd be talking to a bishop. As he looked at him Georgie wondered if there ever had been a plane-crash in which everybody was saved, except one man.

That night at the United Bankers! With himself and Golden, two of a platform of four, debating the motion *That the Irish are the Most Tolerant Race in the World*. Three sentences. Three not too lengthy sentences about how silly it is for Irishmen to be chasing Freemasons as if they had four horns and two tails; and there he was, the next morning, crucified in *The Crucifix* under a three-column headline—**BANKERS DEFEND MASONS**—and, on page four, a leading article entitled, 'So this is Holy Ireland?' signed *Louis Paul Golden*. Naturally he was barely inside the door of the bank before he was called into the parlour.

'I understand, Mister Canty,' old Plummer smiled at him across the carpet with teeth that would clip a hedge, 'I understand that you saw fit to defend Freemasonry in public last night? Is that correct?'

Now, of course every man in the bank knows perfectly well that there isn't a month that old Plumtree Gum doesn't toddle off to the Masonic Hall with his little apron and all the rest of his regalia; and, for all anybody knows, he might be the great Mah Jong of Molesworth Street, he might be the Prince Mason of the Western World. So, what could Georgie do but rub his palms, smile a man-of-the-world smile, and utter these famous last words:

'Irishmen are in many ways absurd . . .'

They heard Plummer's roar outside in the Foreign Exchange Department. After that it was ding-dong-bell for five minutes . . .

Who—would somebody please, *please*, tell him—who ever asked anybody to defend anybody in private or in public? And if, by any possible chance, however remote, anybody ever did happen to require the kind services of anybody why should anybody think that *his* brilliant services were what was specifically demanded by the occasion? And, furthermore, there were people in this city who were very well equipped to defend themselves for themselves. And furthermore, he himself had lived in this city for fifty odd years and he had never made any secret of the fact that he was a member of the Worshipful Grand Order, and if he was ever required to defend himself he could do it very well indeed thank you without anybody's assistance! And, furthermore, and especially, he would be greatly obliged if people would have the goodness to remember that their job, first, foremost and before all, was to consider the interests of the institution that paid them and made them, which would be a jolly sight better thing for all concerned than to be going out and opening their bloody gobs to make roaring asses of themselves in the bloody press, and he would be infinitely obliged to Mr. Carty if he would remember *that*. And, furthermore . . .

Not a peep out of Georgie. He sat dumb as a goldfish until he heard the voice of God Almighty bidding him good-morning in a voice like a hangman's chaplain, followed by the words: 'I will consider later, Mr. Carty, what disciplinary action may be most appropriate to the occasion.' As Georgie walked back over the two-and-a-half miles of marble floor to his cubby-hole not a sound was heard, not a funeral note, except for some scut softly whistling 'Will ye no come back again?' He had not done much work in his cubby-hole that day, waiting to be packed off to some back-of-beyond like Killorglin or Cahirciveen. After six weeks without one good night's sleep, he had applied for a week's leave of absence, on a doctor's certificate.

The loud-speaker retailed a female voice in Irish, of which he understood only the word Gurrabbullabaloo, which means, 'Thanks'. He opened his eyes to see the queue trailing out. He was the last man on the plane. He took the last seat. He found himself sitting beside the last man in the world he had wanted to see again. Their safety-belts got entangled. Golden looked up and at once shot out his paw:

'Georgie Carty, for all the world! Well, isn't this the real McCoy. This is great luck.'

Georgie shook his hand warmly:

'Louis Golden. Well, I'm delighted. Simply delighted to see you. Travelling far?'

'Let me help you with that belt,' said Golden, and he tucked Carty in like a baby in its pram. Then he patted his thigh. 'How's tricks? I heard you weren't too well.'

'Not bad, not bad. And yourself? And the missus? All the care doing well?'

As they roared down the runway for the take-off Golden blessed himself piously. Carty thought it just as well to do a fiddle, also, around his third vest-button.

'I suppose,' he said presently, trying to suggest (but only suggest) a faint sneer, 'you're off to some ecclesiastical conference?'

Golden leaned over with a confidential, crooked grin and nudged Carty.

'Mattherofact, d'ye know what I was doing the last time I was in Paris? I was touring an Australian Jesuit around the night-clubs. He was very agreeably surprised.'

'In which sense?' asked Georgie, modulating between innocence and insinuation. Golden only laughed and waved a tolerant claw.

'Harmless. A bit of leg. Nothing more. The usual routine. We did about five or six of them. Folies Bergères. Bal Tabarin. Chin-Chin. Eve. The Blue Angel. Nothing at all to it.'

Georgie squinted sideways at him, thinking of the moths in the Bal Tabarin coming out in the altogether.

'Did *you* approve?' he enquired.

'It's not a question of approving.' When he said 'question' his two white teeth went bare. 'It's all a matter of atmosphere. When in Rome, and so on.'

He grabbed the hostess by the hip and ordered two double-brandies. This, mind you, at nine-thirty in the morning!

'Morals' he explained to Georgie, 'morals in the sense of *mores* are always affected by time and place. For example, would you walk down O'Connell Street in the middle of the noon-day with nothing on but a Lastex slip?'

'The Guards'd have me in the Bridewell in two ticks.'

'There was a fella walked down the Rue Royale last year with nothin' at all on. He was only fined five francs. Betty Grable could walk down the beach at Biarritz in a G-string and a smile and nobody would look twice at her.'

The brandy was going to Georgie's head. He leaned over and laughed:—

'I believe Lady Godiva rode down Broadway wan time in her skin and everybody ran out in wild excitement to see the white horse. But if that be so what's this I hear about the bishops not wanting girls to wear cycling-shorts?'

'Who would?' cackled Golden, and they went hard at it.

They were still arguing the toss over the Channel, and whether it was the six double-brandies, or the elevating sensation of being up in the air, Georgie began, in spite of himself, to find the little runt almost bearable. It was not until the Eiffel Tower appeared out of 'the smoke that he brought down the question of Free-masons:—

'You knew blooming well that night that I wasn't defending

Freemasonry. But in spite of that, you bastard, you came out in your rotten rag and tore the guts out of me.'

'Editorial policy.' Blandly.

'Do you realise that you nearly cost me my job?' And he told him all about it.

'Ah! No!' cried Louis, genuinely distressed. 'For God's sake! Is that true? Well now doesn't that show ye what Freemasons are!'

All the same, he stuck to his guns. Georgie had to grant him that he stuck to his guns. And they were still at it as they whirled around The Undying Flame in the bus; and as Georgie had not booked a hotel he went off with Louis; and by the time they were finishing lunch, and two bottles of Nuits Saint George, they had arrived at the Arian heresy—about which they both knew sweet damn-all—and were still at homoeusion and homousion at half-past four in front of two Otards and the Café de Paris in the blazing sun.

'Now, look, Louis, you flaming scoundrel,' Georgie was saying, 'your trouble is you're a moralist. All you want is an autocratic, oligarchic Church laying down the law about every fecking thing from cremation to contraceptives. You're a Puritan! That's what you are!'

Louis leaned a gentle hand on Georgie's arm and breathed on him like a father confessor.

'Georgie! I'll tell you something. Here in Paris. As bloke to bloke. I have exactly the same pashuns as you have. But I know me pashuns! I know them—and they're dynamite! And what's more, the pashuns of every Irishman are dynamite! And double-dynamite! And triple dynamite! And if the priests of Ireland are hard on their own people, it's because they know that if they once took the lid off the pashuns of Irish men and Irish women, aye and of Irish children, the country would BLOW UP! Look at Saint Paul!'

Georgie looked and saw a smashing blonde. Louis dragged him ashore, and the pair of them took Saint Paul down to the Rue Donau where Golden knew a little bar called of all things *Le Crucifix*; and then they took Saint Augustine, who was a bloke Georgie said he never liked—And he didn't care *who* knew it!—across to a bar on the Quatre Septembre where they had four flat Guinness for ould Ireland's sake; and then they took the Manichees and the Jansenists, and Pascal up to the bar at the Gare du Nord; and then they went up to Sacré Coeur to say a prayer, and lean on the balustrade, and Louis explained all about Modernism to Georgie, and Georgie said it was his cup of tea, and to hell with the Council of Trent anyway for jiggering up everything; and then they had dinner near the old Pigalle, with two more bottles of Nuits Saint George; and then nothing would do Louis but to prove he wasn't a Puritan by going off to the Bal Tabarin where they had two bottles of *champagne obligatoire* at three thousand francs

a nose.

All Georgie could remember after that was seeing twelve girls coming out on the platform, with about as much on them, if it was all sewn together, as would make a fair-sized loin-cloth for one Zulu, and telling Louis, with his arm out to the twelve girls:

'There y're! Janshenist'd shay thatsh shinful! And you—And you're a fellow I never liked, and I don't care what you think! —you agree with them!'

'No! Exhplain to ye! Nothing that God made is shinful. Couldn't be. Shin is in us. Those girls aren't even an occashun of shin. And why? 'Cos they don't bother us.'

'Bother me,' said Georgie. 'Bother me a helluva lot. That little wan with the green hair would bother Saint Augustine!'

'God's truth?' asked Louis.

'Struth,' said Georgie.

'Come on out,' said Louis, getting up.

'Sit down,' shouted Georgie, dragging him back.

'C'mout,' said Louis, getting up again.

'Down!' shouts Georgie, hauling him down again.

'Out!' shouts Louis.

'Be quiet!' shouts everybody, and your two men began to shout at everybody else, and to fight one another and a table gets knocked over, and champagne gets spilled on a girl's dress, and the twelve girls pay no attention at all only kicking away up in the air like galvanised geese, and the two of them get hauled out and slung out on their backs on the pavement. Like one man they rush back. Like one man they get slung out again. At that they get up and they look into one another's faces, their noses one inch apart:—

'You dirty little Freemason!' says Golden, baring his two teeth, and his lips glistening in the moonlight.

'You rotten little Puritan!' says Georgie with the hate of hell in his voice.

At that the two of them stopped dead as if they were a pair of waxworks out of the Musée Grevin, horrified by the sight of the hate in one another's faces. They were so horrified that they burst into a wild fit of laughing. They rocked there in one another's arms, falling over one another with the bitterness of the laughing and the hatred and the shame.

A taxi drew up beside them. They tumbled into it. And the next place they were was in the square in front of Notre Dame because Georgie said he wanted to see if the moon could laugh at them as much as it laughed at the gargoyles. The square was empty—it was after one in the morning. The two of them linked arms and began to stroll along the river singing the saddest Irish dirges they knew. Georgie used to say afterwards that he often thought of the poor women inside in the Hotel Dieu enduring the pangs of childbirth while the two of them were bawling away about their wild Irish rose, and wouldn't she come home again,

Kathl-e-e-en! For the rest of the week they were inseparable.

When Georgie and Louis meet nowadays in the street; they always greet one another warmly. They ask after one another's health. They send their regards to one another's wives. If a companion asks either of them, 'Who was that?' he will say the name, add, 'Not a bad sort of chap.' and feel the shame of that night burning in him all over again. For of course, the truth of the whole matter is that once you go on a drunk with a fellow you're stuck with him for life: and in Ireland every bitter word we say has to be paid for sooner or later in shame, in pity, in kindness, and perhaps even in some queer sort of perverted love.

## LIAM O'FLAHERTY

---

### THE OLD HUNTER

MR. STEPHEN MULLEN, THE HORSE-DEALER OF BALLYHAGGARD, WENT to an auction one day. He was a tall, slim man with a red face and white eyebrows. Being a very popular man, on account of his dry wit and his good temper, he met many friends in the town where the auction was being held, and the result was that he spent the morning in the hotels drinking. Slightly intoxicated, he arrived at the auction when everything was sold except an old hunter called Morrissey.

Mr. Mullen went up to the auctioneer, a friend of his, and asked him had he anything left. The auctioneer pointed to the old hunter.

"That's the lot," he said.

"What's that?" said Mr. Mullen, shutting one eye and cocking his head sideways.

"Pooh!" said the auctioneer, "there's enough iron in that old rascal to keep a factory going for a month. Tell you what, these bank-clerks and shopkeepers that are buying horses now with their ill-gotten gains don't know a . . ."

"Hech, hech," said Mr. Mullen, "let's have a look at him. I might give ye the price of a drink for him."

They walked over to the hunter. He was a finely built animal, but he looked like a man that had just left a nursing home after a serious nervous breakdown. His bones were sticking through his hide, and though he held his head proudly in the air, it was obvious that he did so out of respect for his ancestry and not because of any consciousness of his strength. He was of a bay colour and somebody had fired his left hind leg so clumsily and in such a cruel manner that it appeared to have been done with a red-hot crowbar. The pelt was quite naked of hair and the flesh was singed in streaks.

"Look at that," said Mr. Mullen, pointing to the leg. "Did you get him from a tinker, or what?"

"Lord have mercy on yer soul," said the auctioneer, "that fellah has a pedigree as long as yer arm. Come here, I'll show ye."

"Ye needn't bother," said Mr. Mullen. "What good is a pedigree to a dying man? The Master o' the Hounds might give a few bob for him for the pack."

Mr. Mullen wrinkled up his face in a smile and he looked at the auctioneer with his mouth open. He really wanted the horse because he liked the old fellah's head, but he wanted to get him for next to nothing. The auctioneer also wanted to get rid of him

very badly, but still, he wanted to strike a good bargain.

"Now drop the coddin', Mr. Mullen," he said, "and buy the horse if ye want him. Sure I needn't tell you what a horse is, whether he is a horse or a mule. Man alive, sure a few square meals 'ud change him so much ye wouldn't know him. Look at his . . ."

"Aye," said Mr. Mullen coldly, "let's have a look at them. I mean at his insides. I bet he's got a smoker's heart and a liver stitched together with the best silk thread. If I buy him, would you get him carted home for me?"

"I can see it's out for coddin' me ye are," said the auctioneer, turning to go away.

"Very well," said Mr. Mullen, clearing his throat, "I'll make ye an offer for him."

"What's that?" said the auctioneer, halting abruptly and turning around to Mr. Mullen.

"I've got thirty bob on me," said Mullen, contracting his white eyebrows. "I'll give ye the lot, though it's good money wasted."

The auctioneer pursed up his lips and stared at Mr. Mullen for a few moments as if he were dumbfounded.

"D'ye really mean it?" he said.

Mr. Mullen nodded.

"Take him home, for God's sake," said the auctioneer.

Mr. Mullen paid for the horse and took him home. He led him along beside his own horse, and it was the devil of a job to keep him in hand. He had his head in the wind and champed along, rearing and trying to break loose.

"Good Lord," thought Mr. Mullen, "that fellah is a corker for his age."

Mr. Mullen went to a party that night and there was heavy drinking. In his cups he began to boast about the old hunter he had bought for thirty shillings. Everybody made fun of him about it, so Mr. Mullen boasted that he would ride the old horse to the meet of the Ballyhaggard hounds next day.

"Wait till you see," he cried. "I'll leave you all so far behind that I'll have the fox's skin dressed before you arrive."

Next day Mr. Mullen's head was as big as a pot, and when he remembered his boast he was disgusted with himself. But he was a man of his word and he ordered the old hunter to be saddled for him. He drank a considerable amount of raw whisky and mounted him. Off he went to the meet.

Everybody in the district turns out with the hounds, from Lord Cranmore to Mr. Mulligan the butcher of Murren. All sorts of ungainly beasts appear. In fact, Mr. Murchison the new Protestant curate once joined, mounted on a cart-horse, which a scoundrel called The Tiger Donnelly sold him as an Irish hunter. But when Mr. Mullen himself appeared that day on Morrissey, everybody agreed that such an extraordinary animal had never been seen before. It was like a mortally sick man appearing at a wedding, half

drunk and insisting on being the most hilarious person present.

"Bravo, Mr. Mullen," said Lord Cranmore. "The dead have arisen. Eh?"

Everybody laughed and Mr. Mullen was deeply insulted, but when the cavalcade set off, by Jove, Morrissey behaved himself marvellously. Like a good thoroughbred of the old school, he showed every ounce that was in him. He cleared the ditches and fences as lightly as those wonderful horses for which the Galway Blazers were famous, fellows that could live a week on a raw turnip and cross a bog without wetting their fetlocks.

Mr. Mullen kept refreshing himself now and again with stimulants, and as a consequence rode even more daringly than was his custom; but the old hunter carried him all day without a single stumble, until at last, just before the finish, he arrived at the drain that flows from the workhouse, about a mile outside the town. There is no more filthy or evil-smelling drain in the world. There is no necessity to describe it.

But when Morrissey arrived at this drain at full speed, he stopped dead. Undoubtedly the animal was too well bred to face it. Mr. Mullen was pitched over the horse's head and he fell headlong into the stinking place. Several people pulled up, but Mr. Mullen crawled out uninjured. Seeing him, everybody went into hysterics with laughter. He was indescribable, and in fact unrecognizable. Morrissey lowered his head, sniffed at Mr. Mullen and set off back at a mad canter.

"It must have turned his stomach," laughed a red-haired farmer.

"Yer a lot of scoundrels," shouted Mr. Mullen, struggling to his feet and holding out his dripping hands that were as black and sticky as if he had dipped them in tar.

Morrissey was found again and brought back to the stables. Mr. Mullen went home and had a bath, and by that time his anger had worn off and he himself was able to laugh at the joke. Next morning he went to look at Morrissey. The poor animal was quite stiff with his efforts of the previous day. But he still had his head in the air and he whinnied joyfully when he saw Mr. Mullen. That softened Mr. Mullen's heart towards him.

"Damn it," he said to the stable-boy, "he's a great old horse. I'll take him down to the shore and give him a dip in the salt water to soften his legs."

He rode Morrissey down to the strand. It was a fine day, but there was rather heavy ground-swell and the waves broke on the sand with a thundering noise. This thundering noise and the menacing aspect of the dark green waves rising suddenly within a few feet of the shore and falling with a thud, terrified the horse. It was impossible to get him to walk in the tide. At last Mr. Mullen managed to get him near the surf, when the tide had receded for a particularly long distance, as it does now and again, after a certain number of short waves have broken.

Then as the horse was stamping about and snorting, trying to get away from the water, an enormous wave rose suddenly and almost enveloped him. Instead of trying to run backward, he was so confused at the rush of water under his stomach that he plunged out to sea. Mr. Mullen tried to head him off, but it was no use. Presently another equally large wave arose, passed right over the horse and the rider, so that they both turned a somersault. Mr. Mullen was thrown from the saddle and he became entangled somehow in the horse's legs. When he came to the surface, after having saved himself, the horse was five yards away and Mr. Mullen was in deep water. He swam a few strokes, struck ground and then looked behind him. There was the horse, swimming mightily out towards the open sea.

"God Almighty!" cried Mr. Mullen. "With ten pounds worth of a saddle on him."

Mr. Mullen dashed up on the strand and began to call some boatmen that were there. They ran over to him.

"Hey," he cried, "if he drowns, will he sink or float?"

"God save us," they cried, "who are ye talking about?"

"My horse, damn it," cried Mr. Mullen; "he's gone out to sea. Don't ye see him? Look."

"Aw, snakes alive," they said, when they saw the dark object, heaving along sideways, like an unwieldy porpoise.

"He'll float sure enough," said one man, "with the water he'll swallow."

"All right, then," said Mr. Mullen, "get me a boat. I want to save the saddle. The horse isn't worth his keep, but the saddle is worth money. Get a boat for me."

They rushed down a boat and put to sea after the horse. When they had gone out almost half a mile, they met the horse swimming back towards them.

"There he is," cried one boatman.

"He's floating, sure enough," said Mr. Mullen. "Get alongside him and get the saddle."

"It's not floatin' he is but swimmin' like a warrior," said the boatman.

"'Strewh!" said Mr. Mullen.

They were all amazed and they lay on their oars, as Morrissey swept past them towards the beach, going at a terrific pace. They followed him, and when they reached the strand, Morrissey was standing there, shivering and exhausted. Mr. Mullen took off his hat and struck his forehead.

"Well, that horse beats all I ever saw," he said. "Here. I'll buy a bottle of whisky over this. Come on, men."

After that Mr. Mullen and the horse that went to sea became quite famous in the district. So that Mr. Mullen grew fond of the horse and he kept him all that winter in his stables with plenty of food. But he made no attempt to ride him, and although the fame

of the horse spread afar, still nobody made an offer for him. Because even though he was famous for having swum a mile out to sea and then swum back again, he was also famous for having thrown Mr. Mullen into the workhouse drain.

Then in the following April another extraordinary thing happened to the horse. I must say that he had improved considerably during the winter. He had fattened a great deal and his hide was becoming almost glossy. The mark on his hind leg was not so outrageous, and to an ordinary person he seemed a perfectly sound horse. But to a horseman he was still an old crock. One of those game old things, whether they are old colonels who insist on wearing tight waists in their seventieth year, or old horses or old battered fighting cocks that take a step ferociously and then glare, wagging their chaps aggressively as if they were in the prime of their lives. But all the buyers admired him and left him alone. Then Mr. Stanley Edwards came to the town.

Mr. Edwards might be called a crock as well as the old hunter. He spent a greater part of each year in a nursing home. The remainder of the year he spent in the pursuit of extravagant pleasures, not always very well considered. His money was tied up in Ireland, otherwise it is very probable that he would never spend a week in it. But when he had done a great bout in London, he always had to return to Ireland to get some more money. After one of those bouts and a month in hospital, he engaged a villa in Ballyhaggard to take the sea air. A few days after his arrival in the town he came to Mr. Mullen. Mr. Mullen looked him up and down, rather surprised that such a weakling should come to him for anything.

"Well," he said, "what could I do for you?"

"Look here," said Mr. Edwards, "I have to live for a few months in this ghastly place. I'm sick and I have very little money. I have been here three days and I'm quite fed up with walking up and down the shore and talking to the lunatics around here. I want a horse. Can you get me one?"

"Let me see," said Mr. Mullen, looking at him shrewdly, "you'd want a quiet horse, I suppose?"

"I want a horse," said Mr. Edwards pettishly. "It doesn't matter what he is. If he breaks my neck it might be a jolly good idea."

"I see," said Mr. Mullen. "I think I've got the very thing that'll suit you."

"Oh! Look here," said Mr. Edwards rather nervously, "I don't mean I want some . . . eh . . . crazy thing. You know . . . a . . . oh, well . . ."

"You leave it to me," said Mr. Mullen. "You can try him out before you buy him."

Morrissey was brought out and Mr. Edwards immediately mounted him and trotted off. Mr. Edwards looked a very poor figure on horseback. Some wit said that he was born to be a rag-picker, because his gaunt frame bent like a willow rod and his nose

was so long that he could use it in the same way that an elephant uses the top of his trunk. But such a slight weight suited the old horse and he went off very gallantly indeed, with that twirl in his right hind leg, which is a sign of old age in a horse and which warns off the cunning buyer but which is very attractive; like the smart twirl of the spurred boot which tells the swagger cavalry officer.

Mr. Mullen looked after the horse, scratching his chin and thinking that he would be glad to accept a five-pound note for him.

After an hour, Mr. Edwards returned, perspiring but looking very happy. A good hour's trotting on a well-bred horse on a fine spring morning would make a corpse almost come to life again.

"Go all right?" said Mr. Mullen, smiling engagingly.

"Splendid," said Mr. Edwards, sitting the horse and wiping his forehead, as if he were loth to dismount. "How much do you want for him?"

"I'll take thirty pounds at a pinch," said Mr. Mullen, after a moment's apparent thought and looking at Mr. Edwards as if he were going to do him a favour, which, however, gave him a great deal of pain.

"Oh!" said Mr. Edwards, a little surprised.

Then he dismounted and looked curiously at Mr. Mullen.

"It's a lot," he said.

"Oh! Well," said Mr. Mullen, making a gesture with his hands, "a horse isn't a bicycle."

"Quite," said Mr. Edwards. "Now, let me see."

He walked around the horse and passed his hand over the horse's body in various places. Mr. Mullen was very glad to see that he touched the wrong places. Then Mr. Edwards stood at a distance from the horse and looked at him. He seemed very loth to leave him. Mr. Mullen began to feel very comfortable.

"Look here," said Mr. Edwards at length, "I'll come back tomorrow and have another ride. May I?"

"Why, certainly," said Mr. Mullen affably. "You can have a look at his pedigree now if you like."

"Oh, has he got a pedigree?" said Mr. Edwards.

"Lord, yes," said Mr. Mullen, "yards of it."

Here it must be stated, that although Mr. Edwards was a wealthy country gentleman, he kept motor-cars instead of horses and knew nothing about the animals except on race-courses. So that a pedigree seemed to him as good a guarantee of perfection as the maker's name on a Rolls-Royce.

"Let's have a look at it," he said.

Mr. Mullen produced the pedigree and Mr. Edwards inspected it.

"In that case," he said, "I'll buy the horse right away."

"It's like taking milk from a child," thought Mr. Mullen, as Mr. Edwards wrote out the cheque.

Everybody expected Mr. Edwards to break his neck, and some

people said that Mr. Mullen played rather a scurvy trick on the poor fellow, but during the whole of that summer the horse was seen on the roads almost every day, trotting along in the pink of condition. And what was more, Mr. Edwards became quite a new man. Whether it was the sea air or the riding that did it, he regained his health to an extraordinary extent. He did not become robust but he was no longer an invalid and he led a decent healthy life. In fact, just before he went away, he came to Mr. Mullen and said: "Look here, Mr. Mullen, you've saved my life."

"Glad to hear it," said Mr. Mullen, without winking an eye.

In September Mr. Edwards left the district, but instead of going to England, as was his custom, he returned to his property in County Kilkenny. Nothing more was heard of him or of the horse for two years. And then two months ago I met Mr. Mullen in Dublin. We were having a drink together and talking about various things, when he suddenly gripped my arm and said:

"D'ye remember that horse, Morrissey, I had, the fellah that threw me into the drain?"

I nodded.

"Ye remember I sold him to a chap called Edwards from Kilkenny. Well, I've just been down there to a show. Met him there. He's still got the horse, going as strong as a three-year-old and . . . d'ye know what I'm going to tell ye? That horse saved his life, as he said himself. When I asked him about the horse, he said: 'I wouldn't part with that horse for a thousand. I haven't left this district since I saw you last, and I can drink two bottles of port now after dinner without turning a hair.' "

So that, indeed, it seems that there is something in a pedigree.

## EXTRACT FROM A NOVEL

AMOS LAY IN THE HEAT OF HIS STUFFY ROOM WHICH HE DID NOT DARE to lessen by pulling away the bedclothes that were shielding his eyes from the light, or by opening the window that he had shut to lessen the noises from the street. Once in bed all his exhaustion seemed to leave him and there was this struggle to sleep just as in the night there had been the one to keep awake.

He had taken this job when he had finally come to accept the fact that he would never make enough money to live on from his books. It had been a great blow, this realisation, but in another way he was ever grateful that at last he had been delivered from the fever of hopes and disappointments in their regard. He could still feel again the actual fever with which he used to stand before the paper-stall at the corner after a book of his had come out, getting up the courage to buy a copy of the literary weekly in which there might be a review. He could recall how he took the folded paper in his hand and the nervous awkwardness with which he began manipulating the sheets to find the one where the reviews of the new novels appeared. And the outcome had always been the same. The eminent critic had taken his book, that like a fruit Amos had been ripening in the warmth of his heart-blood all these months, had held it in his expert hands and exerted just the right degree of pressure. (Amos, as he read, could almost feel the analytic fingers on his own vitals.) And, of course, it had simply shrivelled up, and nothing but a few pale drops, like tears, had trickled into the literary test-tube.

Instead of leaving it at that, and returning quietly home to a cup of tea, or dropping into a pub for a drink to wash the dry taste of the critic's dismissal out of his gullet, he would dash off to find some antidote in another periodical. He had been wounded in his deep and secret self-esteem; that, as he saw now, had been what had given rise to all the trouble. He would run around to the public library and wait his turn in a kind of agony for one of the old ladies to be done with a weekly, in order to pounce on it. Then there were the days of impatient waiting until the next week's batch of literary papers appeared. But meanwhile he would search high and low in the windows of bookshops for some glimpse of his novel. And if he did catch sight of it, it was like a balm to him, and he took a bus home (his search might have taken him into another part of the city) full of hope.

When Leonard had come to see him he had kept him on tenterhooks with his flow of talk. Len might start off with: "Know

what I saw the other evening when I was taking Pauline home? No, don't look at me like that!" and Len's hand shot out towards him and his face creased up into pleasant amusement at what he imagined Amos' suspicions about his relationship with this girl. Whereas in reality Amos hadn't the slightest interest in any of his girls and had only begun to listen at the words: 'Know what I saw?', imagining that what was coming must have something to do with what was for him the one burning topic. But, of course, after keeping him in suspense by going into all sorts of side issues, when Len finally came back to what he'd been saying, it turned out to be no more than some ridiculous incident—as it struck Amos—which Len related in every trivial detail.

And then, just when Amos had thought he could bear no more of this fever, this longing and disappointment, it had left him. Everything appeared in what he immediately recognised was a light with the calm and purity of truth in it. He saw how ridiculous it was to want to be hailed as a great writer or anything of that kind, as if a great artist was some kind of degree that was conferred or a rank that you were promoted to!

At last he understood that to be even a fairly good writer needs endless patience, humility, and, above all, self-forgetfulness. It needs, in one respect, the same detachment and isolation from the world and worldliness as it does to become a saint. While there he had been, running after the world and its praise, and in general working himself into a state of mind in which it was impossible to produce a single page of good work! And now he saw what a blessing the neglect that had worried him so much really was, for without it he would never have had the resolution to have sought out that state of quiet, inner detachment in which to serve his art in simple devotion.

When Amos awoke he thought, as nearly always happened, that to-day at least he had had a really long sleep, though it turned out, as usual, to be no more than noon. But, as he had to make the journey down town to the bank and back, he got up and fortified himself with a cup of strong coffee.

Everything about the bank made his heart sink. The discreet notices standing framed on the massive counters, the air the clerks had of belonging to a secret cult as they flipped over the notes with a practised circular motion of their moistened fingers, gave Amos the sense he had as a boy in church. And when he got in line for one of the cashiers it was like approaching the altar for Holy Communion! He hardly dared watch the notes that were being slid across the dark, polished wood to those in front of him, just as, long ago, he had kept his eyes timidly lowered till his turn came to receive the Host. Conscious of some slight but betraying ineptitude in the very way he pushed the cheque over the counter, Amos waited anxiously while the clerk examined it. He saw him turn and disappear with it through a door in the partition. He could see through the clouded glass the shadow of the cashier and

the other shadows against the glow of the lights that burnt in these inner recesses, and all seemed to be bending over the cheque he had presented in doubt and suspicion. He even imagined he caught a pause in the subdued clatter as typists looked up from their machines at the offending piece of paper.

The clerk emerged and with him came another, someone from the inner sanctum. Amos could imagine a faint, triumphant fanfare from the chorus of typists as this second official appeared. The sober cut of his jacket, the angle at which he held his head, all betokened long and devoted duty in the service of stability and banking. Leaning forward towards Amos, he said in a low voice: "This cheque has been stopped."

What Amos answered he didn't know. He may have murmured something, some kind of apology even, and held out his hand for the piece of paper. But the official shook his head with the same air of wanting to be done as quietly and decently as possible with the shameful incident, and handed the cheque to the clerk.

"Major Bellew phoned this morning soon after we opened with instructions about this cheque," he repeated.

So much sober self-assurance, such massiveness in stone and marble and polished mahogany must be right; the muted clamour of a battery of typewriters, the stacked ramparts of notes bound in bundles, the great cathedral-like dome were all too much for Amos, so he turned and slunk away. And to be honest, he reflected, perhaps it only needed having a few hundred quid safely lodged away behind these brass grills to take a different view of the whole ceremonial. Then, possibly, the more solemn and solid the better, and the more secure would be the treasure.

So much for Major Bellew! But it didn't do to dwell long on people like that, or he might begin to have a grudge. And a grudge weighed down his heart and in general clouded the days for him.

He was not long home before there came a bang on that brass knocker which had been one of the reasons why he had let himself in for the little flat. To have a door with a knocker on it which he could close on the rest of the world had been too much of a temptation. So he had had to take a job. And he had chosen one at night, optimistically supposing that he would still have enough time for his own work in the day.

Though, of course, once safely shut in behind his knocker there was always a moment of glad anticipation whenever there came a bang on it. This sense of excitement and anticipation often endured no more than the first few minutes of a visitor's arrival, but now, as he welcomed Malcolm, it did seem that they must have a great deal to say to each other and that, after not seeing each other for some time, they really might come to that understanding and intimacy that they had often seemed on the verge of.

Malcolm leant up against Amos for a moment, putting an arm round his shoulder. "You're looking fine; yes, really splendid,"

he said. And Amos, in spite of a slight sense of chill, answered with an attempt at enthusiasm. But he knew that all was beginning on a false note again, because he wasn't fine or splendid. The skin of his face was dry and stiff with sleeplessness and when he smiled it felt like cracking. But before he could answer, Malcolm was sliding into the living-room with his slight swagger.

Long ago when they had first met, Amos had looked up to Malcolm, had seen in him a very sensitive person who, in spite of his wealth, was aware of what was going on beneath the surface of the places he was always travelling to. He had sensed a depth of wisdom and judgment in him, seeing him as a just and detached critic of life and art. And it had made him happy to have a friend like this. It was always good to feel that there were people like Malcolm in the world, the whole horizon seemed to widen. Only later and little by little he began to have doubts. The early vision had faded; Malcolm's explorations of far places took on a touristy flavour and his interest in art a kind of dilettanteism. Malcolm seemed to shrink and Amos had felt in some way guilty, as if had he only gone on believing in the original Malcolm he might somehow have preserved him against that diminishing. It seemed that Malcolm was aware of it too and that he lately tried to re-establish himself in Amos' and in his own eyes by talking more and more about himself whenever they met.

Now he was launching out on an account of an exhibition of his pictures he had held in South America. Amos saw the little gallery filled with Malcolm's rich, touristy friends and a sprinkling of the more sophisticated natives, and Malcolm, his face glistening with that peculiar pallor it had when he was worked-up and excited, flitting from group to group, filling up glasses. He was telling Amos how marvellously all had gone off, and yet by the very way he was perched there by the mantelpiece, stubbing out half-smoked cigarettes with the quick, darting movements of a bird prodding its beak into the earth, Amos knew that it had turned out another disappointment.

"They told me afterwards that our Ambassador had looked in. Stupid, that I missed him . . . not that I give a damn, really," Malcolm was saying. "He may have been there and no one have simply bothered to tell me . . . when I rang the Embassy next day they didn't seem to know anything about it."

Amos felt that if he could only now tell Malcolm simply and honestly how he too had gone through similar futile hopes and disappointments in regard to his writing they might really get close in a way they had so often seemed on the verge of. Not, perhaps, that even at his most desperate Amos would ever have sunken quite so low as to ring up an Embassy, but that was only because his secret pride was greater than Malcolm's and he had not the same naivety.

He did actually begin. He was going to say that had there been even one small picture that Malcolm had painted in pure

love and faith he would have had a reward far beyond shaking hands with all the ambassadors in South America, but Malcolm was off again and Amos saw that it was useless. Malcolm hadn't come to listen to anything he had to say but to play a part of his own. And it became clear to Amos that even these disappointments never affected him deeply because he could always plunge into something else, move off to another city, take up a different hobby. It was a continual dabble, dabble with Malcolm, a constant flitting hither and thither, a nervous preening of feathers in a fleeting ray of sunshine and then off quickly, quickly, before the shadows lengthened.

From the moment Amos had opened the door and seen the small, delicately built figure of Malcolm poised half jauntily before it an idea had come to him. He had put it away again and tried to forget it. It was like making up one's mind to go to the dentist. It was simply a matter of getting over a moment of shock and then it would probably turn out to be far less of an ordeal than it looked in advance.

Amos thought the moment would never come when he could get in the words that he had already prepared. To interrupt Malcolm was like breaking in on some sort of performance and he had to wait for an interval, for one of the infrequent pauses and then come out with it.

It was over; he had taken the plunge; the ripples were flowing gently back and Malcolm was saying: "Of course, Amos. Sure ten will be enough?"

Malcolm thrust a hand inside his beautiful, grey jacket as though, Amos thought, he was touching a wound. But that was all nonsense. Malcolm was genuinely glad to lend him ten pounds, and he was only feeling for his pocket-book.

"Damn!" he exclaimed. "I've left my cheque-book in my other suit. Just a second, though. I think I've got it here in notes, all but a few shillings."

In the end Amos got nine pounds, ten; and he couldn't say that it wasn't any good to him. He had wanted to bring the girl the ten pounds as though for the cheque, and catch the look of relief in her eyes. He knew all the varying expressions certain faces take on in moments of crises, as he guessed their meeting would be for her. He knew the way a face tries to veil itself against sudden set-backs, the ready-made expression it quickly tries to shelter behind, and, on the other hand, the kind of slow, half-doubting relief that dawns on it when, for once, something turns out well.

But if he arrived with less than the full sum it would be spoilt. She'd begin to wonder. And he hadn't enough from his weekly wage to make it up. He began surreptitiously feeling the silver in his pocket which was all he had left till pay day came round again. He needed at least another half-crown.

After Malcolm had gone Amos went back to bed. And now,

when there was only a couple of hours left before his appointment, he fell into a deep sleep and awoke to the frenzied ringing of the alarm clock. This was the worst moment of all in these days, this getting up at the beginning of the night. He dragged himself into the bath-room to try to sluice away in cold water the clinging shreds of sleep from his face. With blinking eyes he saw the small room and through the open door a corner of the living room. He contemplated the familiar pieces of furniture, the few books, the cards on the mantelpiece, dwelling on them in a kind of fascination as he let himself imagine that he hadn't to set out but had the whole long night in front of him to linger about the tiny flat, drawing the curtains, opening the window. Ah, how lovingly he would then do all, savouring the precious gift of night and leisure, standing at the window with the curtains blowing gently inwards on the evening breeze. He would listen to the homing footsteps along the pavement, sensing the night in all its recesses of gathering silence, stretching around him in its plenitude, ready to enfold him.

He came to himself with a start from these reveries. He had almost fallen asleep again, leaning over the basin with the towel pressed to his face.

## MAD MacSWEENEY

*This poem is very freely adapted from the Irish poem  
"Sweeney the Mad".*

Mad MacSweeney has a swarm of bees in his head  
as well as nine blue devils stirring them up with a spoon;  
he's hopping daft and crazy as a bird  
sitting all day in the hawthorn tree as if it were his own.

Longer ago than there's telling he threw the old book in the lake  
(more power to his elbow, there's too much literature),  
and Ronan up and cursed him to run stark staring mad  
for the rest of his distracted life, and a mouthful more.

So Mad MacSweeney was away as swift as the eastern wind,  
and every blade of grass ducked out to see him going,  
and every star with a terrible clatter fell down from the sky  
to see him, hayfoot, strawfoot, over tree and mountain.

He cried out and raved that his frizzy hair was feathers,  
and in every tree from here to Meath he built a ragged nest,  
until one day he slipped and bloodily fell  
from the tall tree where he sat at rest.

Then he made a long sad poem all about the trees,  
and included one forgiving verse for the curse of Ronan Finn;  
he walked a hundred Irish miles till his legs began at his knees  
and staggered down the High Street wearing only a grin.

That maniac came home as sane as you or me,  
and only that the children knew he was no harm  
no one could have guesed his brain had ever turned,  
or only that the birds fed from his open palm.

But an old besom woman went up to his bedroom  
and dared him to jump about as crazy as he used,  
so MacSweeney leapt upon the bed, then landed on the table,  
straight through the window and on the chicken roost.

The smell of the feathers had him then,  
the old distraction returned  
and he was off through every county  
at such speed that the roads all burned.

Why did you follow her words MacSweeney?  
There's enough madness in the raving world,  
and enough singing birds in the sky this season  
and will be till hell grows cold.

Mad MacSweeney, you're back again with the birds  
up in the hawthorn tree outside my window,  
growing your feathers where the worms can't bite you,  
crazy and free as the wind.

SEAN JENNETT

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### A SONNET FOR A LADY

Because you ask me for another sonnet  
my tongue is tied, my thoughts all fled away:  
and it gets worse the more I dwell upon it—  
I am grown witless, know not what to say:  
but that's four lines gone by without a thought,  
and this the sixth—why, I can count, you know,  
as well as any who have sold or bought:  
eight lines now: I have six more to show.  
Now nine lines—and no mention of your beauty!  
Is this a sonnet to my lady's eyebrow?  
But I do know what is a poet's duty  
and shall not fail in my devotion now:  
    and this, the final couplet, shall declare  
    your poet lives for you: give him your care.

## ARTHUR POWER

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### MARIA ROSARIO

ORTIZ BASARRI GAZED OUT OF HIS TOP ROOM AT THE GREAT BULK OF the Prado opposite. It was evening and the sun flamed in great golden circles as the dusk descended into the sweltering heat which had filled Madrid all day. He thought of the pictures hanging in the silent gallery opposite: of the Rubens' "Ronda" with the peasants dancing around under the shade of the wide-spread tree as they bent under the outstretched arms of the bride and groom, the bride's cheeks flushed with love and the excitement of the dance: then he had visualised "The Three Graces", a group of three nudes with their arms linked, their flesh so real that it almost quivered before you.

Sighing heavily he turned back from the window, and going over to the disused cupboard in the corner he unlocked the creaking door and started to search among the accumulated rubbish of old hats, broken boxes, worn dresses and battered lampshades until he found what he was looking for, a small stiletto in a leather case with a shoulder strap. He had forgotten all about it until this morning, for it was three years since he had opened this cupboard. Disentangling the strap he unsheathed the blade which was long and fine, the point as keen as a needle. Taking off his coat he slipped the strap over his left shoulder and caught the point of the leather sheath on the top of his trousers, and then he put on his coat again, and going over to the window he stood a moment looking at the dusk gathering over the sun-exhausted trees in the park. Then in a sudden panic he decided that he must go, but as he crossed the room he stopped a moment in front of the glass hanging on the wall and looked at his face, for his own face always came as a faint surprise to him, his low bumpy forehead, the small black eyes, his cheeks and chin blue even after a close shave, and he wondered how an ordinary-looking person should have had such strange things happening to him, and how such a person had resolved on such a desperate action, and yet still looked the same as when he sold cheeses and sausages to the garrulous *donnas* of the quarter.

But weeks of intense worry had killed all feeling in him so that nothing any longer, the walls, the streets, the dagger, his clothes or even his face, had any real meaning; for his head was empty as a sack, with an ache which throbbed from temple to temple.

Fitting on his hat he descended into the street. It was the rush hour, and the crowds were hurrying home after the day's work, a succession of young girls and their boys, small thin girls

who were almost running along, an impetus which swept violently against him as he made his way up to the Plaza de Cibeles. Here he saw the terraces of the cafes crowded with faces, the glow of the setting sun on the red awnings, the men and women drinking their aperitifs. He scanned their faces quickly as he passed, hoping that no one would recognise him, and he turned up the Callé de Alcalá.

She said she would wait for him until half past seven and it was now a quarter past, and as if to reassure himself in the turmoil of his mental upset he went over carefully, for the hundredth time, the details of their first meeting.

He was coming out of the Regencia Hotel when he had met Hererro. He had just had a successful deal, one of the few since he had entered the business, for he had sold the hotel a big consignment of cheeses and sausages, and his wallet was stuffed with notes. Hererro had suggested a drink and they had gone to a bodega where they had drunk too many glasses of sherry, for Hererro, like all journalists, drank too much and too quickly.

Afterwards Hererro had said to him, "Don't go home, Ortiz, but come to the Club. We will find some women there and we'll make an evening of it to celebrate your deal."

Ortiz had hesitated, for the money was really a windfall, and such luck might not come his way again. Also his wife, Donna Leonor, was waiting for him at home and she was so jealous. It was like a disease in her, a constant and uncontrollable emotion which welled up at the most unexpected moments and with no foundation, so that he lived in constant fear of it. But he had had so much domesticity, so much Donna Leonor, that the chance of breaking away, if only for a few hours, with Hererro, tempted him gravely. But he had hesitated.

"No—I think that I will go home, Juan," he had said. "Donna Leonor is expecting me."

"They are always expecting you," laughed Hererro—"Why not say that you were kept on business."

"But if she heard that I went to the Club?"

"She won't hear," argued Hererro, "and if she does say it was I forced you to go there to meet a client, the greatest consumer of cheese and sausage in all Castille—a man you cannot meet every day like the policeman on the corner."

"Very good," Ortiz had agreed at last. "I will go for a bit, a couple of drinks—that is all," and hailing a taxi they had driven to a Club on the Avenida de General Mola. It was a mixed Club where journalists, musicians and painters met, along with a sprinkling of well-off business men of artistic and bohemian tastes.

As they entered he saw the Mexican band in one corner, the leader shaking the cone-shaped maracas deliriously, and sinking into a chair behind a white-clothed table shining with glasses and cutlery, he thoroughly enjoyed the unaccustomed atmosphere of relaxation and gaiety. After a while Hererro had got up to dance

and he had not returned to the table, and Ortiz had looked around the room for some companion to amuse him. The most attractive girl was standing by the bar. She was very simply dressed in a plain black dress, and her hair parted in the centre and knotted on the nape of her neck. She was handsome, with a full figure, and long dark eye-lashes which lay against her cheeks. He had got up from his deserted table and gone to the bar, had ordered a drink and started a conversation with her. It appeared that she had been a nurse in San Sebastian during the civil war, but now she was studying painting at the Academia de Bellas Artes, and in a few months she had hoped to go to Paris. Returning to his table she had talked freely of her art, and her ambitions while they had drunk glasses of Seville brandy. It was all very casual and strange and at first he had felt uneasy and had looked around for Hererro to give him help and advice but he was nowhere to be seen. Then he had forgotten all about him, listening to her describe her life among the students and their wild pranks and goings-on, and also her love of beauty and her desire to express the mystery of Life as she had expressed it, with a slow wave of her beautifully shaped arm. Then, half in jest, he had asked her if she had a lover, when she had laughed, and without any false prudery said to him—"I live in such a tiny room that there is only room for one—so, naturally, I have no lover."

Then, as she had continued to talk so enthusiastically about her work, he had asked her if he could see her pictures.

"But why not," she had replied, "they are done to be seen, and now I suppose is as good a time as any—or is it the brandy talking," she had asked him with a smile.

They had gone outside into the warm Madrid night when they had taken a taxi to her place, an old, crumbling, iron-balconied house in the working-people's quarter, and he had followed her up a dark and narrow stairs with bulging, uneven walls, into a small room on the top landing. It was sparsely furnished with a large table in the centre on which was a typewriter. Her drawings were pinned all round on the plain wall, pencil sketches mostly, and a few unframed paintings of figures and nudes. Throwing off her cloak on to the couch she had stood beside him in her low-cut shirt and bare arms, so close that her hair had touched his cheek, and in a moment he had put his arm around her neck and had kissed her passionately and wildly, his lips seeking her mouth. She had not resisted, and in the end they had lain on the big couch where they had remained for several hours, she in his arms, when he had opened the flood-gates of his heart to her, and told her all about his own life and his struggles, and of his over-jealous wife, and he had even mimicked Donna Leonor in a temper which had made Maria Rosario laugh: and he had told her of his little son, while every now and then he buried his lips in her white shoulder. To all he told her she had listened intently, her large, dark eyes fixed on him.

It was three in the morning before he had left, and in spite of all the circumstances he decided to slip a hundred pesetas under a book on the table as he went out.

For a fortnight after Donna Leonor was in a bad humour with him and would accept none of his plausible explanations. But he put up with her sharp tongue, scarcely hearing it, for the memory of that night filled his mind so completely that he went about in a dream all day and in the evening he used to sit behind his paper, only pretending to read. Nevertheless he avoided going near the Club, or passing down the street where she lived.

Then one day his telephone had rung and a woman's voice enquired if it was Senhor Ortiz . . . . "Signorita Maria Rosario wants to speak to you."

He was annoyed to be rung up like this in his office—and yet his heart, in spite of himself, bounded with delight that she should still be interested in him.

"Senhor Ortiz is that you—this is your friend Maria Rosario—you remember? I want to see you very—very much," she said. "I know it is difficult. But I am in a great trouble, and I want your help."

"How?" he had asked coolly.

"It is financial. I am in a great difficulty and I want you to lend me two thousand pesetas."

"Two thousand pesetas," he repeated, thinking that he had not heard her properly.

"Yes, two thousand pesetas," she had repeated.

"Are you mad—two thousand pesetas!" he replied angrily. "I have not got such a sum in the world."

"No, I am not mad at all," she had replied, in a slow, steady voice, "but that night you visited me you left your handkerchief and an under-belt behind. You do not want them returned to your home, do you?"

As he listened his blood ran cold. Then he broke out into a hot sweat.

"I cannot do it," he stammered—"it is impossible."

"I am sorry that you think like that," she had answered. "It is only a loan and I will repay you in a week probably—so if you change your mind in the meantime I shall be in my room, which you know, until seven o'clock this evening."

He had passed all the day in a fever, for shortly after the telephone message Donna Leonor had come into the shop with little Miguel to ask him what time he would be home.

"For if you go to any more clubs and Senhor Hererro comes telling me any more lies I will go back home and take Miguel with me," she announced emphatically. Meanwhile little Miguel peeped out at him from behind his mother's skirts with large accusing eyes. He understood but two things—that his father had done something wrong, and that his mother was always right and Senhor Ortiz knew she meant every word she said, and as a lonely,

ineffective man without much money, the very idea of his wife and son abandoning him drove him into a panic. If Maria Rosario arrived at the house to create a scandal, then all would be over indeed so he went to her room at six o'clock and paid her the money which she had picked up from the table as though the notes had been covered with slime.

"I will pay you back as soon as I can," she had informed him haughtily.

He thought the matter was settled. But three weeks later she had rung him again and made the same demand. He flew into a temper and went to see her, but when he had started arguing and threatening, she had put on her coat and said: "Very well, I will end the matter now and go to your wife,"—so he had paid her once more.

A fortnight later she had rung him up again. He had considered going to his friend Diaz Arrieta, the lawyer, but he had no proofs. Besides, if the police took action all Madrid would get to hear about it, including Donna Leonor. So he had paid. But already he was almost ruined. The shop was bringing in very little and he was in such straits that he had to cancel their usual trip to the sea, and so Miguel was deprived of his annual holiday. Soon he would have no money even to buy him clothes, for Maria Rosario was pitiless, and he could barely believe it was the same girl he had driven home with through the deserted streets on that still, hot night some months earlier, for she seemed to have become a demon who watched with obvious pleasure his distracted sufferings, her face disfigured with greed and cruelty. But if he continued to pay her he was ruined. There was only one thing to do. If he were caught and garrotted—well—at least he would have had his revenge. But there was a fair chance of success, for he had been so weak and frightened when he had been to visit her that she obviously took no consequence of him. Also he had never met anyone when he had visited the house; their doors had always been closed.

As he walked down the street surrounded by a sea of people who jostled and pushed past him, he slipped his hand inside his coat and loosened the dagger: then he entered the doorway and mounted the stairs quickly, as he felt for the thick rag he had put in his left-hand pocket. But though his limbs still worked his heart died within him for not alone was he overcome with fear, but something else held him back as well: the destruction of an ideal. All his life he had dreamed and wondered about a girl like Maria Rosario, some talented and beautiful creature who would suddenly understand him and love him. That night he thought, by the wildest chance, he had found her, and all that had happened had surpassed even his dream, only to be followed by this sordid soul-crushing sequence—money and more money, and her insatiable cruelty. He sighed heavily, but his legs still kept mounting

the stairs.

He reached the top landing. Her door was ajar waiting for him, the door which he thought could never open quickly enough that first night.

He drew in a deep breath to fill his lungs and entered, his hand inside his coat. She was sitting at the table with her back to him pretending to write. She did not turn round, and gripping the hilt of the stiletto firmly in one hand, and holding the rag in the other he approached her.

"Here I am," he said in a soft voice, to reassure her, and leaning over he clapped the rag to her mouth with his left hand, while with the other he plunged the dagger into her heart. She struggled violently and screamed, and bit through the rag, but he held her firmly. He thought for a moment that the knife had missed her heart, and he felt like a matador who having used all his impetus to drive in the sword, lying between the bull's horns, fears that he has missed his mark. But soon she sagged and he let her collapse down on to the floor, the blood trickling out of her mouth. She quivered once or twice, moaned, and was dead.

Withdrawing the knife he wiped it carefully on her clothes and put it back in its sheath.

He then listened to hear if her closely-muffled screams had alarmed anyone. But the house was silent, and while he stood there intent he watched a young cat come gingerly out of the corner and approach the body and smelling around start to lap the blood.

He ran his eyes over the table and a notebook caught his attention. With the rag still covering his hand he opened the cover and read:

... Diaz Artinans—rich and susceptible, but a bachelor—Family from Segovia . . . vain and talkative . . . said his mother was religious . . . friend of Paquita . . . 200 pesetas.

Miguel Chanez—sardine manufacturer, Bilbao, tough and sharp . . . married with two children . . . Refused and threatened reprisals.

Pedro Ordonez—see tonight 8.30 Club . . . 300 pesetas . . .

Picking up the book Ortiz slipped it into his pocket and he listened again. All was silent. He dusted the floor around him quickly with the rag, and wiped the handle of the door and then he went outside and pulled the door after him and wiped the outside handle as well, and dusted the landing, and then descended the stairs, sweeping the rag on them after him until he came to the last floor, when he ran down the remaining stairs into the street.

An exaltation filled him and rushed joyfully through his veins so that the blood seemed to sing in its course, and he suddenly felt himself possessed of great power. He had thought that he would fail, but instead his plan had been a complete success. "Woe to those who try to victimise me," he muttered confidentially to himself.

It was now dark, and the windows of the shops and the houses were lit with lamps which threaded the dusk from behind the silhouettes of the iron balconies. The crowds had ceased, and he turned up into the Callé Meyor and then down towards the old stone Ponte di Segovia which spans the Mazanares. Here the trees murmured softly, their dark plumes moving against the star-filled sky, their leaves reflecting the lights as they tossed to and fro in a gentle shimmer, and it seemed that their indistinct voices spoke to him, telling him to be at ease as they swayed indolently in the night wind.

Going down to the river he threw in his stiletto and its holder and belt, the waters avidly clasping and destroying them into its black depths. Then, moving further along the bank, and sitting down under a lamp he drew out Maria Rosario's notebook and scanned the pages, straining his eyes to read it:

'... Rigelio... Jeweller in Barcelona—500 pesetas, 1st May  
—14th August 300 pesetas. . . .

—Telephoned Thursday... appointment... appointment failed... Journey to Barcelona 10th July. . . .

He turned over the page:

'... Juan Fernandez—police agent. Married... Easy-going, nervous.

300 pesetas—4th June

700 pesetas—30th July

1,000 pesetas—20th August.

Ortiz stopped and read the name again—"Juan Fernandez" . . . He was one of the police heads in Madrid and he remembered that Hererro had introduced him once in a *bodega*—a handsome, broad-shouldered man, his hair beginning to turn grey. Ortiz had taken particular notice of him because Hererro had told him that he worked in the Criminal Investigation Department. So he had been one of her victims?

He read a few more pages then tore up the book into tiny pieces and threw handfuls of it into the river. Then he turned for home.

When he arrived back Donna Leonor was already seated at the table with her son, and to his surprise did not ask him where he had been, or make any comment at all, but occupied herself with the boy's supper while the child prattled without ceasing. During the meal Ortiz felt a wonderful sense of security after the months of constant worry.

He waited until they had all gone to bed and then he took a newspaper and a pair of scissors and he cut out two words he found on its pages: 'Estas' and 'Libre'—"You are free"—and he put them into an odd envelope he found. Then getting some gum he pasted on the address made out of single letters he cut from the newspaper, and next day he posted the envelope at the General Post Office, to Juan Fernandez at the Police Headquarters.

The murder caused a sensation in Madrid. A girl had been stabbed to death by an unknown man, and every woman, no matter how old, felt she was unsafe. The motive was evidently revenge, because no money or jewels had been taken.

Her parents, two peasants, came up from Estremadura and claimed everything, and they were indignant that the police had not found the murderer: and to stifle the ugly rumours which were current in the city they decided to give their daughter an expensive funeral. It would also, they hoped, stir up the indignation of the people against slackness of the police, and when the Madridites picked up their newspapers next morning they read the following notice:

La SENORITA



**Maria Rosario Ero Uragoitia**

who was foully murdered by an unapprehended person.

— R. I. P. —

Her parents pray that her friends will recommend her soul to God. After Mass at the parish church of San Ignacio her body will be taken to the Polloe cemetery.

Your sympathy is requested.

At two o'clock the funeral cortege, followed only by her parents, wound its way through the streets, the horses heavily caparisoned in black coverings and bearing white plumes, and the coachmen wore three-cornered hats and had large black rosettes tied to their whips. Standing at his office window Police Inspector Juan Fernandez saw it coming up the hill watched by a curious crowd from the pavement when a knock on his door disturbed his thoughts, and Detective Sergeant Aquilar entered.

Turning back from the window he faced the man:

"Well! Have you found any clues?" he asked.

"We have found a lot of men's clothing—vests, belts, collars, pants, every sort of thing in fact—but the job will be to trace down the owners, and then we may have some sort of a clue. Here is a list of the things," he added, putting down a typewritten sheet on to the table.

Fernandez glanced at the paper a moment, pretending to cast his eye over it.

"Very good," he said, "that will do, but I am engaged on something very important just now so I will ring you later."

The man saluted, turned and went out, and Fernandez went back to the window. The hearse was just disappearing out of

view, behind some Insurance Offices and as it turned the corner Fernandez took out a cigarette and a box of matches, and extracting Senhor Basarri's letter from his pocket he set it alight; then putting the flame to his cigarette he blew out a thin coil of tobacco smoke.

"I am free, and you, whoever you are, are free too," he exclaimed, as the paper burned out in his hand.

Then he went to the telephone: "Send me up Ayueda Diaz," he ordered, and he put down the receiver again, lifted his legs on to the table and lay back coiling rings of smoke out of his mouth.

"I will hand over the case to Diaz," he said aloud to himself—"and I think I am right when I say that he is the stupidest detective in the world, who, even if the King had left his royal robes there he would not recognise them—no, not even if the Royal Crown had been laid on top."

## DONABATE

IT MAY SEEM AN ODD THING TO SAY THAT, NOT SO LONG AGO, IT WAS a common thing to see the late Sir Sefton Fleetwood-Crawshay, O.B.E., very drunk in a rather low Dublin public-house—and consorting with questionable fellows. And yet he was the perfect gentleman.

Sir Sefton was an Englishman who had spent an industrious and frugal lifetime looking after British railway stations in the capacity of architect. With his pension and savings, he was well-to-do on retirement but, entertaining great fear of his native country's Socialist Chancellor, hastily settled down in Dublin. Here—a man to whom in the past a small sherry seemed excess—he was induced by some demon to drink a glass of Irish whiskey. It was the glass of doom.

The velocity of his disintegration was startling. He began to drink whiskey all day long—longer, indeed, than the licensing day, for he would rise at seven in the morning to visit the privileged taverns at the markets near the Four Courts.

At about two one day I saw him in a pub with three chaps I knew. I joined the group. Sir Sefton was truly very drunk and had trouble in plucking the particular star he wanted from the constellation of small ones that was arranged on the counter in front of him. Still, he had them all finished when the half-two closing was called. He ordered one of the chaps to call a taxi.

"We will all go to Amiens Street Station," he muttered, "for the holy hour."

I could not dissuade him. We went in the taxi. In the station bar, I ordered five small whiskeys.

"Are ye travellers?" the girl asked.

"We are," I said. I noticed that Sir Sefton was appraising the station's face with his old practised eye.

"I can't serve ye if ye haven't tickets," the girl said.

"Where are we supposed to be from?" I asked.

"Donabate."

*Donabate!* What a place to must be from, a rolling slobland pocked with cheap bungalows and shacks! I turned to go for the tickets, but Sir Sefton had heard. He held up a flat hand.

"Under no circumstances," he said. "Leave this to me."

He left the bar, heading for the ticket office, using that fast turn of speed which drinkers know to be the only hope of avoiding wild staggers. He returned and pressed five cardboards in my

hand. I showed them to the girl and we got our drinks.

I lost sight of Sir Sefton for some weeks, but I was told that he was making a practice of these visits to Amiens Street at half-two, always buying a ticket to Donabate. Being near the station one day during the hour, I remembered this; I went in, bought a ticket to Donabate, and entered the bar. Yes, Sir Sefton Fleetwood-Crawshaye was there. He saluted me.

"Donabate?" he asked.

"Donabate," I said.

He nodded in a musing sort of way, and quietly attacked his drink.

"Do you know," he said after a pause, "I like this country. I should like to give some small service. I am still an architect, I hope. I understand lay-out. Donabate is very much in need of a survey—for that matter so is every town in Ireland. You will admit the main street could be improved. We need new churches, too, everywhere. Immense improvements need not be costly given skilled planning...."

He trailed off into meditation, reviving to mention the vital importance of squares, otherwise how can one hold huge public meetings? I did not find this amusing. It saddened me.

Each time I met him thereafter, his poor brain had further softened. Overcrowding in Donabate must be ended by the simple expedient of erecting great blocks of flats. The American steel-and-concrete technique would be admirable in such a setting. A race-course would bring much-needed revenue to the town, and were there not great expanses of sand nearby, ideal for gallops? But one must not overlook the necessity for a proper car park, with restaurants, cinemas, and soforth.

On another occasion he discussed, though rather tentatively, the founding of a university at Donabate.

"But first," was ever his final cry, "the survey! The survey first!"

He meant it, too. He was determined some day to go to Donabate to do the survey.

One day, as was deposed at the inquest, he entered the bar, showed his ticket and had a drink. He was carrying the reel of tape surveyors use. He kept looking at the clock and suddenly made a wild exit from the bar, tried to enter a train which was just moving off, fell between the train and the platform and was instantly killed.

I have said he was the perfect gentleman, incapable of a mean act. A month after his death, I put on a raincoat I had not worn for a long time. In the pocket were the five tickets Sir Sefton Fleetwood-Crawshaye insisted on buying the first day we went to the station. Pathetic but noble tokens! They were First Class!

## INFLUENZA

WHEN MARCIA BEGAN TO BE MISSING FROM THE USUAL PLACES AND when her friends got no answer when they rang her up and especially when they saw Charles dancing with Rosamund, they thought they must really find out for themselves so they went to the flat one night and when the door was opened by a fair young man in a dressing-gown who said Marcia was in bed and could not see anyone they thought they knew what to think and went away to say it.

And when Hannigan had shut the door on them he went slowly back and stood looking down at Marcia who was asleep, and yawned and went into the bathroom and gargled and came back into the living-room and lay down on the day-bed with an eider-down and the *Mercure de France* and the works of Gogol, for he was working through the Russian classics.

But that is not the beginning of the story, that is the middle: The beginning was the morning she woke as always to see Jean's bright eyes looking down into hers and Jean's hands holding a bowl of coffee like an oblation before her and she thought of saying, Jean, Charles doesn't love me any more, (but there was no need to say anything for Jean would soon know, your *valet de chambre* knows everything) and there were snow-flakes slanting slowly past her window from a high metallic sky. She drank a little coffee while Jean moved about the room, picking up *marrons glacés* and a stocking and a theatre programme from the floor for Marcia was a slut, but when he went away she had nothing but the snow-flakes slanting past the window and Charles' reasonable voice saying, You see I just don't love you any more and she could not bear it and jumped up from her bed and mixed a drink, for her knees trembled, and rang for Jean to prepare her bath and make an appointment with her hairdresser and she bathed and dressed after a fashion, fumbling and dropping things, for Charles' unloving had made her body clumsy. She looked in the mirror wondering if sorrow had changed her but she saw no difference as yet, and bundling herself miserably into a fur coat she rushed downstairs and hailed a taxi, thinking at least I can cry while I am being shampooed, and did.

When she came out of the hairdresser's the snow was still slanting slowly down from a very high sky and she did not know where to go for anywhere there might be Charles; and then she saw in tall letters on the side of a kiosk, Salle Pleyel, so she said Salle Pleyel to the taxi-driver, it was a smooth unwounding sort of name and she could hide there from Charles. In the taxi she

could still see the snow-flakes pointing downwards and it seemed that some were entering her heart and piling up in a chilly drift that numbed her.

When she got out of the taxi and stood on the kerb outside the Salle Pleyel they closed round her in their silent chilly softness and she shuddered, defenceless, for she had no love to keep her warm and no pride of body to sustain her. She paid the taxi-man and walked unsteadily into the foyer feeling the full pathos of Marcia Drexel going to an afternoon recital. The snow resting on her eyelashes melted and became tears. She walked warily, for the whole world was shifting and deliquescent and she felt that at any moment she might be floating in space.

It seemed that Cortot was playing that afternoon and that there was no seat for her anywhere; and while she was trying to understand this a harsh voice said to her: I have two Press tickets, you can have one if you like, you'll have to sit beside me but you needn't talk to me unless you want to, and she saw a young man in a navy blue suit looking like Belfast on Sunday (only Marcia did not think that for she did not know Belfast) and she said But how kind of you and the young man said Not at all I've no use for it and did not look at her. He added You'll have to come very quickly if you are coming and put his hand under her elbow and guided her into the Salle. The dim cream dome soaring above her and the mazy tuning of the strings made her feel unreal again and she might have acquired levitation and floated away somewhere but that the young man's harsh voice boring steadily into her half-conscious mind insisted on the Here-and-Nowness of things.

In the first interval he pointed out the Important People in the audience and she was surprised to find that she did not know them but they were all French which perhaps explained it and it had not occurred to her that so many important people were French, or indeed that so many French people could be important. He gave her a great deal of information and she really listened and when she discovered that she was really listening she was pleased, just as a patient who has had a serious operation is pleased when he finds that he can read or listen to the radio.

In the second interval the young man talked about music and Marcia found that much harder, she had never heard anyone talk about music before but she listened to what he was saying and even asked questions which he answered very fully and seriously. During the playing the great curving Salle held her as in a womb and the music was a strenuous weaving of sound with voices rising and dying in it like the voices of vendors crying through the traffic. It flowed round her but it did not belong to her, did not either assail or assuage her, and when it stopped and Hannigan began to talk again she saw that he had a usefulness for her; among all the fluting and growling French voices his voice spoke for her alone, spoke teachingly, maddeningly, boringly, but

while he spoke she was not alone and she could not weep. As they were moving out she said faintly The César Franck tired me and he said Yes, it's apt to do that; now I am going to take you to have a cup of tea and Marcia said Oh, thank you gratefully and did not remember that she did not drink tea.

He took her into a tea-shop so peculiar that she could not imagine Charles was with her for Charles would never have gone there, and she looked at Hannigan for the first time, at his hawk features and amazing yellow hair, but what she saw was not significant to her and she looked away out of the window at the dark blue sky and the cruel stars pricking it with needles of light. Paris lay cold and white, dead white, a frozen corpse, and she shuddered and said Paris is horrible in snow and Hannigan said gloomily Baudelaire would have liked it, and quoted *J'avais banni de ces spectacles le végétal irrégulier* and began to talk about Corbusier's plans for city architecture.

She drank her tea very slowly because she was afraid of what would happen when she had finished indeed she became so frightened that she interrupted the lecture on town planning to ask Hannigan if he would dine with her, Only, she said painfully, I don't know where to go . . . for where would she be safe from Charles?

Hannigan who disliked being interrupted but saw that she was a young woman who did not know Paris told her quite kindly that he had to do *The Merry Wives* at the Theatre Anglais but she could come too if she wished and they would dine early near his newspaper office for he had to do his Cortot piece and there wasn't much time. At the unnatural hour of half-past six Marcia was sitting with him at a marble-topped table, in a crowded restaurant struggling with the gross portions of food, dazed by the hustling service and the shouted orders, and horribly fascinated by the dreadful woman in black presiding at the *caisse*. She could not drink the *vin ordinaire* but Hannigan drank several pints of it and sketched for her the history of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the Little Theatre movement.

*The Merry Wives* was not at all what she expected, it was not like Shakespeare but like an ordinary play and very entertaining and when she told Hannigan she liked it he said gloomily he had seen it done better in Hull which made her feel humble as she had never been to Hull. He was a rebuking young man and he did not look at her when he spoke.

After the theatre he said they could not have supper or a drink as he had to go straight to his office and he put her into a taxi and she went home and dropped off her clothes on the floor and slid into bed in a kind of torpor for she had had only one dreadful meal all day and no drinks and she was not accustomed to listening to people.

And that was the first day without Charles.

For most of the next week while her friends were ringing her

flat she was looking at tapestries in the Galliéra, skulking amongst Cambodian antiquities in the Trocadéro, peering at medals in the Musée des Monnaies or stumbling among state coaches and Renaissance fireplaces at the Musée Cluny for Hannigan was showing her Paris.

She travelled by Métro and climbed the Tour Eiffel, she rose early to hear Mass at St. Etienne du Mont, she visited Père Lachaise and the Russian church, she drank coffee at midnight in the little café of the mosque and one night she actually walked about the streets on the Rive Gauche while Hannigan reconstructed Lutetia for her. Sometimes when he was telling her that Paris was spanned by twenty-four bridges or that the Palais de Justice had the oldest public clock in France or that a Foire aux pains d'épices was held in the Place de la Nation, she would think Charles doesn't love me any more and shudder away from the pain, saying with a throb of anguished enthusiasm Oh, yes, how very interesting and Hannigan found her ignorant but willing to learn. She never said she was tired though she often felt faint from the number of steps they climbed, dazed from the number of facts he recited and stupefied from stumbling down the corridors of museums.

Her feet grew long and flat like the feet of Englishwomen, her head got the upward tilt of those who Baedekker, and when they were on the trail of a beau monument she panted like any tourist. She had to cling to Hannigan because when he left her to buy their tickets or to go to the lavatory she wept, but when she saw him coming back her tears returned to their source for there was something about Hannigan that made grief impossible.

They ate in brasseries or workmen's taverns wherever they happened to be, for with Hannigan eating was just eating, not lunching or dining. If she said she wanted a drink he said they would have a café crème soon. If she said she was cold he would say that was because she dawdled. He did not always have to go to the newspaper office in the evening and one night she rebelled against the brasseries and brought him home to the flat and sent Jean out for two dinners and wine and flowers and Hannigan said it was a nice little flat but overheated and could he have a bath there sometimes as baths were expensive. Marcia said of course and gave him Charles' key and after that when she returned to the flat she would hear Hannigan gargling in the bathroom or reading Dante aloud in the living room for he said Dante was good for his Italian. Marcia had taken a writer's flat and Hannigan found his books useful.

Occasionally Hannigan came in the morning with a map of Paris and a time-table and then Marcia could not lie in bed smoking and thinking of Charles for although she did not want to see Romanesque churches, although Clouet said nothing to her and Goujon was indeed dead, it was easier to yield to Hannigan's plans than to oppose them. If he came back with her at night after a theatre before she could remember how Charles would

have piled cushions on the floor and pulled her down on them Hannigan would be saying Get into bed now, no, you don't want another drink, you've had two, I'll make some citron pressé for you, go on now. Hurry. It's late.

One short winter day she had lounged on the day-bed all day, smoking, sending away the lunch Jean brought her and holding a memorial weep for Charles when the sound of a key in the lock made her put on the light and rush sobbing to the cocktail cabinet for even if life had stopped even if nothing will ever happen again you must mix drinks for your friends and when Hannigan strolled in looking more than ever like Belfast on Sunday, the sobbing ceased, for with so much of the commonplace filling the room there was no place for Charles. She ran off to have a bath, leaving the bathroom door open so that she could talk to Hannigan and Hannigan, having removed an eyebrow tweezer, a cigarette lighter and one ear-ring from his favorite chair, began to read the news aloud from the French newspapers, for he liked reading aloud.

That was the end of the first phase.

In the second phase she began to look at Hannigan and resent him. She resented his stocky walk, his priggish French, his fleshy mouth, his phrase *Let-me-give-you-an-outline*, his oldmaidishness, his interest in *Lutetia*, his lacklustre eyes, his correction of everything she said, his way of dropping a subject directly she began to argue about it and the notes he made on the books he was reading.

She resented him for laying waste Paris, for making a cemetery where every sculpture he showed her turned to a tombstone; whatever he touched lay down and died and she did not want to look at it again. She shuddered and thought, Hannigan is the devil, offering me the kingdoms of the world if I will look at them as he does; that is what hell is, to see the world as Hannigan sees it; then sometimes she thought Hannigan is God, incapable of weakness or *parti pris*, but how awful if God were Hannigan.

She resented him for never looking at her, for never considering her, for saying don't interrupt me, for paying her no attention beyond buying her tickets and pointing out the ladies' cloakroom, and for 'working through' the Russian classics.

She resented his spatulate fingers and his miserliness, his ideas on ventilation and his habit of yawning. If she had told him that the *Salle Grecque* was a chamber of horrors, that the *Madeline* was a monstrosity, that the heart of Paris had been plucked out, that she looked for a country far beyond *Baedekker*, he would have said We'd better have something to eat now, confident that food would restore her sense of proportion.

But she clung to him because when he was there Charles was not, he was able to keep Charles away, and after all every day was a day and that was the only way she could hope to live.

In the third phase she got influenza and Hannigan nursed her.

The influenza may have been a protest against Charles' cruelty or a protest against Hannigan's bullying, or a device to break down his inattention, or, quite possibly, just influenza.

She lay in bed and burned and shivered and watched Hannigan putting her white lilac where she couldn't see it and sternly converting the room into a Sick Room. Darling Jean appeared at intervals and made her bed most smoothly and tenderly, delicately inserting hot bottles between the blankets. He knew when the light was hurting her eyes or when she wanted the window closed without being told. Hannigan never knew anything, even when she did tell him, but she was usually too inert to bother. He loomed over her now and then, stuck a thermometer into her mouth, looked at her disparagingly, whisked the thermometer away and read it without saying anything. He seemed sometimes to be there in the night as well as the day, but it did not matter, she was very ill, she would probably be worse, and she must not die, Charles must not have that to his credit. She did not think at all of Charles while she was in bed, for when you have influenza you are your own lover and every ache, every throb is passionately noted and loved. There were days when Marcia was not sure whether she had pneumonia or pleurisy, but when the doctor came he did not say and she feared to ask. One morning she woke up and looked about her and the room stared back at her harshly like Hannigan, and the clear light was wounding, more than she could bear, as if the urgency of life were pressing cruelly upon her and she thought, Now I really am going to die, these things can go on living and I cannot, they have more life than I have, for she felt stripped and resourceless, and the furniture in her room stood out in emphatic shapes, vulgar with life, and Hannigan came in and put a thermometer in her mouth.

When he took it away she asked faintly, What is it, and he said You're normal, and she said But I feel ghastly, and he said Yes of course, that's why, what do you think, and yawned and went away. Then darling Jean came and bent over her, looking at her with his big bright eyes, holding a little bowl like an oblation before her, saying in his warm, tender voice, Ca va beaucoup mieux, n'est-ce pas? and she wanted to burst into tears, for after all it is very sad to be twenty-two and ill in Paris and to have no one to love you but a *valet de chambre* and no one to nurse you but a dramatic critic. But Jean went on holding the bowl and coaxing her and after she had taken a little he brushed her hair very sympathetically and the cold light warmed as the February sun crept round to her window, pale and smiling like another convalescent. When Jean had gone she lay with her cheek on her hand, looking at nothing, thinking of nothing, sad, but not unhappy.

In later years she used to refer to this post-Charles interregnum as That-awful-time-when-I-had-flu'-so-badly-in-Paris, and although her friends believed they knew better, they were never able

to say so for by that time she had become a *marchesa* and too valuable a person to offend.

The next evening she got up for an hour and sat in a big chair and Hannigan sat opposite in his favourite chair and read Schnitzler, and they did not talk at all, just as if they were married. Marcia smoked and looked at Hannigan, seeing him as she saw everything now in this new perceiving way, saw his hawk face and his yellow hair, noticed how narrowly he missed beauty and how completely, and thought, Poor lad, no woman will ever love you, and was really quite sorry about it, which was rather remarkable for a convalescent and most remarkable for Marcia. And wishing to do something for him she got up and mixed two drinks and as she handed one to him she thought I owe my life to this man, which may or may not have been true, and she said You know, Hannigan, you've been very good to me, and Hannigan yawned and shut the Schnitzler and said I had nothing better to do.

But you might have caught the 'flu!

I shouldn't have minded.

But you might have died of it!

I shouldn't have minded that either.

Hannigan!

I know, said Hannigan in his harshest tones, That my life will never be significant.

Marcia shivered and looked down on Hannigan's yellow head as she stood above him holding a glass in her hand. She felt a current of beauty run through her body as it had not done since Charles' unloving and it made her remote and exultant but she said very earnestly, offering him the solace of her own faith, But surely, surely, you believe that some day something wonderful will happen?

Hannigan laughed shortly, an uncouth startling sound, and put the Schnitzler back in the right place.

No, he said, Nothing wonderful will ever happen to me. Go to bed now, you've been up long enough, and Marcia said Yes, I have, and went. In her bed she tried out each limb separately and found they were free from quirkling pains and peevish twinges and she felt that her sleek body was her own again and fell asleep happy.

In the morning when Jean waked her with a bowl of coffee there was sunshine lying on her counterpane and she stretched, and thought how nice it would be to join her parents in Biarritz; and that was the first morning in five weeks that she had waked without a thought of Charles and with a desire to do something.

Hannigan made her reservation and saw her off and even bought her magazines for the journey which rather touched her especially as they were the wrong ones and as she skipped up into the high train she said I'll write to you, Hannigan, and Hannigan almost smiled and said Thanks, but I don't suppose you will, and he was quite right. She didn't.

## MY OEDIPUS COMPLEX

FATHER WAS IN THE ARMY ALL THROUGH THE WAR—THE FIRST WAR, that is—so up to the age of five I saw very little of him. When he came home on leave he didn't seem to disturb the routine of the home. Sometimes I woke and saw in the candlelight a big figure in soldier's uniform looking down on me; sometimes in the morning I heard the front door slam and listened to nailed boots clattering down the cobbles of the lane. Like Santa Claus father came and went mysteriously. In fact, I rather liked his brief visits, though it was an uncomfortable squeeze between him and mother when I got into the big bed in the early morning. He smoked, which gave him a pleasant smell, and he shaved, an operation I never tired of watching. Each time, he left a trail of curios behind—model tanks and gurkha knives with handles made of bullet cases and cap badges and military equipment, carefully stored away in a box on top of the wardrobe in case they ever came in handy. There was a bit of a magpie about father; anything he saw he picked up, but the moment his back was turned mother let me get a chair and hunt through his treasures. She didn't seem to attach the same value to them as he did.

Life alone with her was very peaceful and pleasant. The window of my attic faced south-east and I always woke with the first light, my mind bursting with schemes. Life never seemed so simple and clear and full of possibilities as then. I put my two feet out from under the clothes—I called them Mrs. Left and Mrs. Right—and invented dramatic scenes for them in which they discussed the problems of the day. Mrs. Right did most of the talking, and Mrs. Left, because I had less control of her, contented herself with nodding vigorously. They discussed what mother and I ought to do during the day, what Santa Claus ought to give a fellow for Christmas, or ways and means of improving the home. There was the little matter of the baby, for instance, on which mother and I could never agree. Ours was the only house in the terrace without a baby, and mother said we couldn't afford one with father at the war, because they cost seventeen and six. As Mrs. Right often said, shaking her head over it, mother didn't know what she was talking about, because the Geneys up the road had a baby, and everyone knew they couldn't afford seventeen and six.

Having settled my plans for the future, I got up, put a chair under the attic window and lifted it high enough to stick out my head. Our attic was very low so I could get my head clear

through. It overlooked our back wall and the front gardens of the terrace behind us and gave a wonderful view across the valley to the tall red-brick houses terraced on the opposite hillside, all still in shadow, while those on our side of the valley were lit up but with curious shadows which made them seem rigid and painted, as though imprisoned in a jelly of light.

After that, I went into mother's room and, climbing into the big bed, began to tell her of my plans. By this time, though I never seemed to notice it, I was petrified in my nightshirt, and I talked as I thawed until, the last frost melted, I fell asleep beside her and only woke again when I heard her below in the kitchen, making the breakfast. After that, we went into town to do the shopping and to hear Mass for father, and, if the afternoon was fine for a walk into the country or a visit to the convent to see mother's great friend, Mother Saint Dominic. In the little convent chapel and again at night before going to bed, we prayed for father to come back safe from the war. Little I knew what I was praying for!

One morning I got into the big bed, and sure enough, there he was in his usual Santa Claus manner, but later, instead of putting on uniform he dressed in his best blue suit and mother was as pleased as anything. I didn't see what she had to be pleased with because out of uniform he was a more ordinary man altogether, but she only beamed and said that our prayers had been answered, and the two of us went off to Mass together to thank God for having brought father safe out of the war.

The irony of it! That very day he came in to his dinner he took off his boots and put on his slippers, put on the dirty old cap which he always wore about the house to save him from colds in the head, crossed his legs and talked very gravely to mother who wore an anxious air. Naturally, I didn't like her to look anxious because then she lost her good looks, so I interrupted him.

"Just a moment, Larry," she said gently.

That was what she said when there were boring visitors, so I attached no importance to it and went on talking.

"Larry!" she said impatiently. "Be quiet! I'm talking to daddy."

This was the first time I heard those ominous words about "talking to daddy", and I couldn't help thinking that if this was how God answered people's prayers he couldn't give them very much consideration.

"Why are you talking to daddy?" I asked with as great a show of indifference as I could muster.

"Because daddy and I have business to discuss. Now, don't interrupt again."

I decided that it was about time for me to start a little cross-praying and get father sent back to the war as quick as I could.

In the afternoon he took me for a walk at mother's request.

This time we went into town instead of out in the country, and, in my usual gullible manner I thought at first that this might be a distinct improvement, but I soon saw that father and I had different notions of what was meant by a walk in town. For him, it did not mean looking at trams and ships and horses, and when I wanted to stop he simply went on, pulling me after him by the hand. I found he was considerably stronger than mother. On the other hand when he wanted to stop we seemed to stop forever, and it was always to talk to some old friend of his who didn't interest me in the least. Even that I shouldn't have minded so much, but when he was really interested he leaned against the wall. The second time I saw him do that I grew desperate. I pulled him by the coat and trousers, but, unlike mother, who, if you were too persistent, grew red and said "Larry, if you don't behave yourself I'll give you a smack," father had an extraordinary capacity for amiable inattention. It was like going for a walk with a mountain. He either ignored the wrenching and pummelling entirely or else glanced down with a grin of amusement from what seemed an enormous height. I had never met a man so absorbed in himself as father seemed.

At tea-time, "talking to daddy" began again, but this time it was complicated by the fact that father had a paper, and every couple of minutes he put it down and told mother something new out of it. I felt that that was not playing fair. Subject for subject, I could compete with him any time for mother's attention, but not when he had the subjects ready-made in a paper I couldn't read. Each time I tried to change the subject without success.

"You must be quiet while daddy is reading, Larry," mother said impatiently.

It was clear that either she genuinely liked talking to father better than talking to me, or else he had some terrible hold over her which made her afraid to tell the truth. I thought myself it must be the latter.

I thought it even more after what happened next morning. I woke, bright and bubbly, at my usual hour, put out my two feet and had a long conversation in which Mrs. Right talked about all the trouble she had with her father and Mrs. Left fervently agreed. Then I got my chair and stuck my head out of the attic window, feeling like an explorer who catches his first glimpse of a strange land. My head simply bursting with stories I went next door and in the half darkness scrambled into the big bed. There was no room at mother's side so I had to get between her and father. For the moment I had forgotten father, and I sat bolt upright for several minutes, wondering what on earth I was to do with the man. He was taking up more even than his usual space and I couldn't get comfortable with him, so I gave him several kicks at which he grunted and stretched. He made room all right though.

"Mummy," I began loudly and contentedly as I snuggled

down into the warmth of the bed.

"Hush, dear!" she whispered. "Don't wake daddy."

This was a new development which threatened to be even more serious than "talking to daddy." If I were to be deprived of my early morning chats, how was I ever to get things clear in my head?

"Why?" I asked.

"Daddy is tired."

"Oh!" I said. It seemed to me a very poor reason. "Do you know where I want to go for a walk with you to-day, mummy?" I went on coaxingly.

"No, dear," she sighed.

"I want to go up Crowley's Lane—you know Crowley's Lane?—and then I want to go down the Glen and fish for thorneybacks, and then I want to go out to the Fox and Hounds, and—"

"Don't—wake—daddy!" she hissed, clapping her hand across my mouth.

But daddy was awake, or nearly so. He grunted, and reached for a match. Then he looked incredulously at his watch.

"Like a cup of tea, dear?" mother asked in a meek, hushed voice I had never heard her use before.

"Tea?" exclaimed father indignantly. "Do you know what time it is? 'Tis only five o'clock."

"Mummy," I said, determined not to let this man banish the phantom enterprise of sleep from my mind.

"Go to sleep at once, Larry," she said sharply.

I began to snivel, but quietly. It was like burying your children from the cradle to smother all your early-morning dreams. Father said nothing but lit his pipe and sucked it, looking out into the shadows without minding mother or me. I knew he was mad. Every time I tried to make a remark mother hushed me irritably. I was mortified. I felt it wasn't fair. There was even something slightly sinister about it. Every time I had pointed out to mother the uselessness of having two beds when we could both sleep in one, she had said that it was healthier like that, and now, here was this man, a perfect stranger, sleeping with her without the least regard for her health or his own. He got up early and made tea and though he brought mother a cup he brought none for me.

"Mummy," I shouted, "I want a cup of tea too."

"Yes, dear," she said with a sigh, "you'll drink from mummy's saucer."

I didn't want to drink from her saucer; I merely wanted to be treated as an equal in my own home, so, to spite her, I drank it all and left none for her. She didn't complain.

But that night as she was putting me to bed, she said gently: "Larry, I want you to promise me something."

"What?" I asked.

"Not to come in and disturb poor daddy in the morning. Promise?"

"Why?" I asked. I was getting suspicious of everything involving that quite impossible man.

"Because poor daddy is worried and tired and he doesn't sleep well at the beginning of the night."

"Why?" I asked again.

"Well, you know, don't you, that when daddy was at the war mummy got the pennies from the Post Office?"

"From Miss MacCarthy?"

"That's right, dear. But now, Miss MacCarthy has no more pennies to give mummy, and daddy must go out and find them for us, because if daddy didn't find the pennies, what should we do?"

"Tell me," I said.

"Well, I think we should have to go and beg them from door to door like the poor old woman on Friday. And we wouldn't like that, should we?"

"No," I agreed. I didn't want to be like the old woman we gave the penny to on Friday.

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Mind you, I meant that. If the man had to find pennies for us it was a serious matter. My intentions were good. Mother had laid out all my toys in a complete ring round the bed, so that whatever way I got out I fell over one of them, and when I woke I saw them, remembered my promise and sat on the floor and played with them for—hours it seemed to me. Then I got my chair and looked out of the attic window for more hours. I wished it was time for father to wake; I wished someone would give me a cup of tea. I was bored, and so very, very cold, and I longed for the mere warmth of the big bed. At last I could stand it no longer. I went into the next room. As there was no room at mother's side I climbed over her and she woke with a start.

"Larry," she whispered, half rising and gripping my arm hard, "what did you promise?"

"But I did, mummy," I wailed, caught in the very act. "I was quiet for ever so long."

"Oh, dear, and you're perished!" she said sadly, feeling me all over. "Now, if I let you stay you must promise not to talk."

"But I want to talk," I wailed.

"That has nothing to do with it," she said firmly. "Daddy is tired and you must let him sleep. Do you understand that?"

"Mummy," I said with equal firmness, "I think it would be healthier for daddy to sleep in his own bed."

The logic of that seemed to stagger her because she didn't say anything for a while. Then she said:

"Larry, you must either stay quiet or go back to your own bed. Now, which is it to be?"

The injustice of it got me down. I had convicted her of unreasonableness out of her own very mouth and she hadn't even

attempted to reply. Full of spite, I gave father a kick which she didn't notice, but which made him grunt and open his eyes in alarm.

"What time is it?" he asked in a panic-stricken voice, not looking at mother at all but at the door.

"It's early yet," she said soothingly. "Go to sleep again. It's only the child. Now, Larry, you see you must go back to your own bed."

This time I knew she meant it and I must stage my demonstration or forever hold my peace. As she lifted me out I screamed and kicked. Suddenly father began to groan aloud.

"That bloody child!—doesn't he ever sleep?"

"It's only a habit, dear," she said quietly.

"Well, it's time he got out of it," shouted father, beginning to heave in the bed. He turned himself to the wall, wrapping the clothes about his shoulders, and looked at us backward with nothing showing but two spiteful dark eyes.

To open the bedroom door, mother had to let me down, and I broke free and dashed for the farther corner, howling. Father sat bolt upright in the bed.

"Shut up, you young puppy!" he said in a thick voice.

Never, never had anyone spoken to me in that way before. I looked at him and saw his face convulsed with rage. It was only then I realised fully how God had coddled me, letting me pray for the safe return of the worst enemy I had.

"Shut up, you!" I retorted.

"What's that you said?" shouted father, making a wild leap out of bed.

"Mick, Mick," cried mother, "don't you see the child isn't used to you?"

"I see he's better fed than taught," roared my father, waving his arms. "He wants his bottom smacked."

"Smack your own," I screamed hysterically. "Smack your own. Shut up! Shut up!"

At that he lost his patience and hit out at me. He did it with the lack of conviction you'd expect of a man doing it under mother's horrified eyes; it was really only a tap, but the sheer indignity of being struck at all by a stranger, a stranger who had cajoled his way into my home and my mother's bed, made me completely hysterical. I shrieked and shrieked and danced on my bare feet, and he, looking awkward in nothing but his grey shirt, glared down at me like a mountain out for murder. I think it was then I realised that he was jealous too. And there stood mother in her nightdress, looking as if her heart was broken between us. I hoped it was. I felt she deserved it all.

From that morning on my life was a hell. Father and I were barely civil to one another. While he talked to mother, I played loudly with my things to show my lack of interest; when I talked to her he reached for the paper. He created a terrible scene when

he came in from work one evening and found me at his box, playing with the regimental badges, button sticks, gurkha knives and model tanks he had brought back from the war. Mother got up quietly and took the box from me.

"You musn't play with daddy's toys unless he lets you, Larry," she said. "Daddy doesn't play with yours."

For some reason which I didn't understand at the time, father looked at her as if she'd struck him and then turned away with a scowl.

"Those are not toys," he said, taking down the box to see if I had removed anything from it. "Some of those curios are very rare and valuable."

But as time went on, I saw more and more how he had managed to come between mother and me. What made it worse was that I still couldn't see what the attraction was. In every possible way he was far less winning than I. He had a very unpleasant common accent and made noises at his tea. For a while I thought she might be interested in newspapers, so I made up news items of my own and let on to be reading them to her but she didn't seem impressed. I took his pipes and went round the house, pulling at them; I even made noises at my tea, but she only told me to stop. Ultimately, it all seemed to be tied up with the unhealthy habit of sleeping together, and I felt if only I knew what mother liked about that I should be able to win her away from him. I made a point of dropping into their bedroom, pretending to look for things I had left there. I went about the room, talking to myself so that they'd think I wasn't watching them in the hope that they'd betray themselves, but they didn't. I never saw or heard a thing. Clearly, the only solution was to grow up quick myself and take her away from father.

One evening when he was being particularly obnoxious, talking to her and leaving me out of it I interrupted him quietly.

"Mummy," I said, "when I grow up I'm going to marry you."

"Are you, love?" she asked gently, but father, who had just raised his paper put it down again and guffawed. It was a hateful sound, that laugh, and in spite of the mockery I felt there was a note of fear in it.

"Yes," I said contemptuously, "and I'm going to have babies, what's more."

"Yes, dear," said mother, "perhaps we'll have one soon, and then you'll have lots of company."

I was enormously cheered by this, though as the baby business developed I had nothing particular to be cheerful about. Mother was preoccupied—I supposed about where she was to get the seventeen and six—and though father took to coming home late I got small satisfaction from her.

Then Sonny arrived, and I disliked him from the first moment. He was a difficult child—so far as I was concerned he always remained a difficult child—and seemed to demand far too

much attention. Mother was very silly about him; she just couldn't understand when he was only showing off. As company he was worse than useless. It wasn't any longer a question of not waking father. The slogan now was "Don't—wake—Sonny!" I could not understand why the child wouldn't behave like anyone else and stay awake during the day instead of making me creep about the house on tiptoe, so, whenever mother's back was turned, I naturally woke him. Sometimes I pinched him as well to make sure he remained awake. Mother caught me at it once and leathered me. One evening, when father was coming in from work I was playing trains in the garden. I didn't look round when I heard his step; instead I pretended to be talking to myself and said in a loud voice "If another bloody baby comes into this house, I'm going to walk out." Father stopped dead at the gate; I could feel him staring at me, and for a full minute I crouched there in silence waiting for him to give me a box about the ears. Instead, he went on into the house without a word. I had intended it as a threat, but its effect seemed to be different. Without drawing the long bow, I feel that from that moment father and I began to come to an understanding.

You see, mother was really quite sickening about Sonny. Even at tea she got up, and looked down at him in the cradle with an idiotic smile and then invited father to do the same. Father raised his head a little and glanced at the cradle with a puzzled air as if he didn't know what on earth the woman was talking about. He complained of the way Sonny cried in the night, but then mother got cross and said Sonny never cried except when there was something up with him. That shows what a fool the woman made of herself, because Sonny never had anything up with him and only shouted to draw attention to himself. It was rather painful to watch and gave me a very low view of mother's intelligence. Father wasn't attractive, but he was clever. He saw through Sonny without the least difficulty.

Then one night I woke and felt something warm beside me in the bed. My heart jumped. I thought it must be mother who had at last given up sleeping with father and come to sleep with me instead. I listened, and heard Sonny wailing in the next room and mother saying softly "There! There! There!" I knew then it wasn't she. It was father. He was lying beside me, breathing hard, wide awake and apparently as mad as hell.

After a while it came to me what it was. It was his turn now. Having turned me out of the big bed, he had been turned out himself. Mother had now no consideration for anyone only that poisonous little pup, Sonny, and father was as much his victim as I. Even at that age I was a magnanimous child; vindictiveness simply wasn't in my nature. I began to stroke him gently and said "There! There! There!" as mother was saying to Sonny. He wasn't exactly responsive.

"Hallo," he said sharply. "Are you awake?"

"Put your arm round us," I said, and he did, in a sort of way. The man was very bony but better than nothing so I turned into him and fell asleep again.

At Christmas he went out of his way to buy me a really nice model railway. Somehow, after that night, there never seemed to be the same bitterness between us.

## TEMPLE LANE

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## SUBURB

The blueprint of time, pain, rescue, can be read in this half acre, these ceiling-crouching rooms, this doled-out garden with its rationed sky. The suburb's self is world on an inch scale; our little slice of it is every community; I, every visionary sensing better things, all sensitives gone witless with routine— thrashing wings against the sides of the community like a tern against cage wires, tern so accustomed to skimming waves and looking down to see fish shadow darken sub-waves peacock green, that he neglects to observe the third dimension—the vertical. Driving against the horizontal with bruising damage and frustration there, the tern, being stunned in the head, is unaware someone has left the cage without a roof so that constellations thatch the third dimension but only those. If I took the vertical way of the mind I might get up and out, except I have been head-stunned this long time with the pure grief of beating wires towards you.

## KNIGHT UNHEROIC

A CONSIDERABLE TIME AGO, (FOR WHAT IS TIME BUT THE BUDDING of the flower and the falling of the leaf) in a country called Talistuld, there lived a noble and intensely conservative knight called Sir William of the Twin Towers. He was none of your modern sausage knights, or patent rubber heels knights, but a real good-sword-and-shining-armour knight, with no nonsense about it, and was full of the beautiful but rather weird ideas of mythical mediaeval chivalry. His fair wife, Dame Winifred, a lady full of good sense and with a sound knowledge of husband management, was unfortunately dead by the year in which my story begins, and indeed ends, in the twenty-second year of young Sir Wilfred, Sir William's only child and chief disappointment in life.

Before I proceed farther with this tale it would be as well to tell something of Sir Wilfred, who is its hero, and whose chief trouble was that he was not at all heroic, yet had been born into a family whose tradition was one of heroism to the last gasp. His father had fought in too many battles and tourneys to enumerate, and in his time had killed five dragons and wounded two. Young Sir Wilfred despaired of living up to his father's reputation and was indeed far more interested in the old books which lined his turret chamber than in deeds of blood and battle. To old Sir William's extreme disgust he would spend hours poring over his rare collection of musty tomes, with a voracious reading appetite that ranged from *The Consolations of Philosophy* by Boethius to such light works (for those days) as *The Romance of the Rose*.

It was lucky for the young bookworm that Talistuld had been at peace for many years, and that dragon-killing had been so popular in his father's day that there was only one dragon left in the whole wide kingdom: the Brown Dragon Terrible of the great forest of Elmwood. It was known in court circles that the King did not want anyone to kill this dragon, as its presence in Talistuld kept up the national prestige and encouraged the tourist trade. It was considered bad form to kill outlandish dragons belonging to other countries, and so the only suitable pursuits left to the young bloods of the kingdom were killing each other, hunting, and jousting.

As the Castle of the Twin Towers stood far in the Northern Marches of the land among lonely hills and forests, Sir Wilfred had never been to a real tourney, and the only knightly sport he was really good at was hunting. In spite of the excellent training in arms that his father had naturally insisted on, he felt far more

at home with hound and falcon than with lance and helm.

Therefore it was with a certain amount of trepidation that he heard his father announce one night after supper in the Great Hall of the Twin Towers that he intended to travel to Merdun, the capital of Talistuld, for the Royal Tourney that was held there every second summer. Wilfred knew that he would be expected to take part in the jousting, and his heart sank at the thought.

After a long rough journey, Sir William's party reached the capital, where they were assigned chambers in the Royal Castle and Wilfred was presented to the King in fitting manner. It was a few hours after this ceremony that something happened that made Wilfred look on life with a very different eye. He fell deeply and hopelessly in love with young Lady Margaret, an orphan of Royal Blood and one of the Queen's favourite handmaidens.

He saw her first in one of the many courtyards of the great castle, standing alone in the sunlight beside a fountain, and, looking on her beautiful green eyes and long brown hair, his heart was suddenly smitten so deeply that he forgot himself completely, and, as drawn by a magnet, strode up to her and knelt softly at her feet, unable to say a word. The vision of beauty and delight surveyed him with much surprise and some displeasure. After a strained minute she said :

"Young sir, know you not that this is a private court? Also, are you not aware that it is customary only for an accepted knight to kneel so to his lady? If you are not touched in your wits, arise pray you and behave sensibly."

Wilfred got up, but was overcome by a strange weakness in the legs, and had to sit down rather suddenly on the edge of the fountain.

"Most fair," he said, "of your clemency pardon my unmanly behaviour—I am not well. My heart—." he said.

Lady Margaret looked at him more kindly and saw that he was fairly handsome and rather young, and that he really did seem rather unwell. When she spoke again her voice was not so cold.

"Who are you, sir?" she asked. "If we are to hold converse, I had better sit down too for the sake of the conventions. Though," she added, with a hint of reproach, "however sick you are you should not as a true knight, have sat down first." And she placed herself on the fountain's rim, but at a decorous distance from his side.

"I am Wilfred, son of Sir William of the Twin Towers, an' it please you," answered he, "and would be your faithful knight to the end of my life if you would accept me," he added, looking hard at the turned-up ends of his court shoes.

"I'm very sorry," said Lady Margaret gently, "but I already have a true knight of sorts, and you can't have more than one unless you're a princess. My knight is very annoying," she sighed. "He neglects me," she said darkly.

"His name?" asked Wilfred, jealousy ravaging his inexperienced soul.

"Sir Guy of Autumnsdale: six feet two, broad in proportion, strong, valiant, very handsome, and completely self-centered. He's been my knight for six months now, and yet we only spoke alone twice. Most unsatisfactory. I think he feels I might be bad for his jousting form. The stupid brute!"

"How extraordinary!" said Wilfred. "I am to joust against him in the Royal Tourney tomorrow. He sounds a cad from what you say—and a fool," and he dared to look up at her face which was attractively flushed with annoyance.

"He's not either," she said rather crossly, "and, even if he is, you shouldn't say so."

There was a short silence; then she said:

"You must beat him for me—badly. But don't kill him."

"They say he's jolly good," said Wilfred doubtfully.

"Of course if you're afraid—" said Lady Margaret.

"I shall beat him," said Wilfred grimly, "even if I have to cheat." A plan was already forming in his mind. But he was very sad.

"You love him," he stated, "if you didn't, you wouldn't want him beaten. You wouldn't care."

She made no answer to this.

"Anyway," said Wilfred, with tragedy in his voice, "I shall be able to serve you once at least."

As there seemed nothing more to say, he got up, and having kissed her hand, returned sadly to his father's chambers.

After about half-an-hour of pacing up and down in his room Wilfred had formed what seemed a workable plan to beat Sir Guy of Autumnsdale.

He knew that his opponent's war charger was a large bay horse about the same size and colour as Wilfred's father's steed, Archibald, an old and trusted friend of Wilfred. He knew also that the horses, which were stabled in the castle, were draped and armoured before the battle, not by their master's attendants, but by the royal grooms.

At dead of night he slipped down to the stables and changed his father's Archibald and Sir Guy's horse into each other's stalls. Sir Guy's beast was inclined to be nervous and noisy and gave him a few anxious moments. But he had a way with animals, and accomplished the change without causing any disturbance.

"Now," he thought, "if Sir Guy fails to notice the difference on the morrow, after the horses have been heavily disguised in their jousting trappings, all will be well; good old Archibald will obey my every command." Then he went to bed. His sleep that night was disturbed by dreams of brown hair and soft green eyes. Next morning, after eating a rather poor breakfast, during which his father gave him all sorts of technical advice which he hoped he was not going to need, Wilfred went to the stable-yard where

the competing knights were mounting for the tourney. All went well here, as Sir Guy, magnificent in blue armour, with a glossy green plume in his helm, failed to notice anything out of the ordinary in his steed.

From the castle the knights rode in cavalcade through the festive town to the Royal Lists, which were splendid with pageantry, colour and beauty, and where a huge audience ranging from the King himself to the youngest 'prentice lad of Merdun waited with wild excitement for the feast of chivalry to come.

Arranged encounters were to be held first, then came challenges. This fight was deemed a walk-over for Sir Guy by all except Wilfred's father, and possibly Lady Margaret who sat very pale and quiet beside the Queen in the Royal Stand.

The first joust was short and fierce, both knights being carried off the field after a single ear-splitting lance-to-lance encounter. Then it was the turn of Wilfred and Sir Guy.

Wilfred rode to his end of the lists with the fanfares ringing in his ears, conscious that in his plain armour he cut a rather unromantic figure compared with his splendid opponent. At the barrier of the lists he wheeled his horse round and laid his lance in rest just as Sir Guy did the same at the opposite end. The signal for the charge! And within a few seconds Wilfred and Sir Guy were thundering towards each other. Wilfred heard Sir Guy's war shout ring out above the roar of the crowd:

"Autumnsdale! Autumnsdale!"

Thirty yards—twenty-five—twenty—fifteen.

Then Wilfred with all his power yelled a battle cry:

"No HALT to the Twin Towers!"

And Archibald, in obedience to his well-known voice, came to a grinding stop, while Sir Guy, totally unprepared, shot over the good steed's ears and bit the sward with a terrific crash, just as Wilfred galloped past.

A great cry of surprise went up from the benches.

Wilfred, muttering a prayer of thanks, reined in his horse, and dismounting he drew his heavy sword and clanked back towards his adversary, who, shaken to the core by his unexpected fall, was just rising unsteadily to his feet. His beautiful armour was covered with grass and mud.

"Yield thee!" said Wilfred, cutting off what was left of Sir Guy's green plume with a whistling backhand stroke of his weapon.

"Never!" gasped the shaken champion slowly pulling a huge blade from the sheath.

In the interests of honour and fair play, Wilfred waited until Sir Guy's sword was out—just out, and then hit him a terrible blow on the top of the helm with the flat of his blade.

Sir Guy crashed to the ground, and stayed there. Wilfred, as the victor, put his foot on the neck of his prostrate foe; the crowd cheered, and in the Royal Stand behind Wilfred, Lady Margaret fainted quietly into the Queen's lap.

The rest of the tourney was very fine, but it does not concern this tale.

That night, during the high celebrations that followed, Wilfred changed the horses back to their own stalls without being noticed, and gave the faithful Archibald a bag of oats for his sterling service.

Next morning, with a wildly beating heart and a slight hang-over, Wilfred sought Lady Margaret in her private courtyard. She was there all right, but there was no welcome in her face, and she stood cold and silent, waiting for him to speak.

Her silence disturbed him, but he said :

"My lady, I have done your bidding, and have come to ask how I may serve you further." The words came clumsily, and he felt that they sounded foolish and stilted.

To his intense surprise, Margaret burst into a flood of angry tears.

"You had no right to do it!" she stormed. "Beating him like that! Disgracing him! And now he's in bed, and has two broken ribs, and his poor nose was all skinned by his helm. You brute—" she sobbed.

"But Margaret! I mean my Lady," stammered poor Wilfred, "you asked me to, I mean, I did it for you. I didn't mean to offend you, I would do anything for you." Here the sight of her tears was too much for him and he took her hand.

She snatched it away.

"Leave me alone," she said hysterically. "Go away!"

But Wilfred had not the common intelligence to obey.

"Please," he begged, "let me do something to make amends."

Lady Margaret looked at him savagely through her tears.

"If you want to do something so much, go and kill the Brown Dragon! But for heaven's sake go!"

At this Wilfred grew rather pale; but his broken heart was full of the high pride born of slighted love: "Very well," he said in a low voice, "your command shall be obeyed. Farewell, my Lady." And he bowed and left her.

An hour later, without telling anyone of his intention, he rode away alone in the direction of the great forest of Elmwood, where dwelt the last dragon of Talistuld.

His quiet departure threw the court into confusion, for when Lady Margaret heard that he had been seen setting out, which was the last thing she had intended or expected, she struggled with her pride for most of a day, and then gave up and went and poured out her woes on the motherly bosom of the Queen. Her Majesty equally alarmed by the possible doom of the young knight and of the kingdom's one and only dragon, told her husband. The King of course, was furious. He immediately despatched messengers to try to stop Sir Wilfred, but it was feared that it was too late.

The King paced his Council Chamber in rage and anxiety while the court buzzed with the news. Reactions were varied. Sir William was stubbornly proud of his son. Sir Guy, however, limping painfully about, his nose scarlet and twice its normal size, completely ruined his cause with Lady Margaret, by declaring in a loud voice that he hoped the young sorcerer would be killed. He was fully convinced that he had been defeated in the joust by an evil spell put on his horse by Wilfred.

As for Lady Margaret, who was really very kind if rather impetuous, she suffered much more from remorse, shame, and anxiety than from the thought of the King's displeasure under which she lay. To make matters worse for her, she was rapidly falling in love with Wilfred. Overcome by her feelings she shut herself up in her rooms.

Meanwhile the cause of all this trouble rode fast and grim towards and into the great forest, which lay only seven leagues from Merdun, seeking his foe, the dragon. He slept the first night under the great trees, wearied out by his long ride, but rose early next morning, and after a cheerless breakfast on some cold provisions he had brought with him, he continued his quest.

Everyone in Talistuld knew that the Brown Dragon lived under a bare rocky peak surmounted by one high pine tree, which rose sheer from the swaying ocean of the forest. It was about three in the afternoon when Wilfred, looking along a ridge at the crest of a slope, saw the fatal landmark, and paused "to make an appreciation of the situation," as his father would have said.

Now, in the cold reality of the day after his rash decision, and faced with the nasty prospect of a fight to the death with a large and probably vicious reptile, he felt decidedly queasy to say the least of it. But he was still hurt enough and proud enough to suppress the uncomfortable imaginings that rose within him, and to ride on, perhaps more slowly, towards the dragon's lair.

In a sunny glade a mile away from where he had halted, the object of his search stood dozing in the sunlight outside the opening of his cave, and chewing a large mouthful of grass. He was a big enough dragon certainly, about sixty feet long and had the regulation issue of spikes, claws and flame-throwers. But he had run sadly to seed in peaceful retirement. He was a confirmed vegetarian with a pot-belly, and had no more thought of killing anyone than has a tortoise. Besides, he was of a naturally shy and retiring nature, and from his earliest youth had suffered from a severe inferiority complex which was due to the fact that he had brown scales, not proper red or green ones like his brothers and sisters. On this particular afternoon he was indulging in a pleasant and harmless day dream in which he was a beautiful brown cow.

His quiet fantasy was rudely shattered by the appearance of Wilfred, who rode out of the trees twenty yards from him holding his lance nervously in rest. The knight and the dragon surveyed

each other with mutual dislike and horror for about five seconds, then, with a shout and a roar of fear they turned as though by common consent and galloped at full speed in opposite directions, the dragon into his cave where he stayed for days, a nervous wreck, and Wilfred away through the green summer forest going for home with the sure instinct of a good woodsman.

After five days ride Wilfred reached the Castle of the Twin Towers and immediately retired to his turret room without deigning to answer any of the questions showered on him by such of the men-at-arms and servants as had not gone with him and his father to Merdun for the tourney.

He spent two miserable days among his books; during which time the various resolutions he had made on his deflated ride from Elmwood forest, waxed and waned with his shifting moods. His mind moved in a welter of ideas of becoming a monk or a hermit, or of riding away forever to unknown lands (his favourite plan because of its sad and romantic ring). But through the confusion he became gradually sure of one thing; that he must see the Lady Margaret again if it were only to tell her how he had failed in her service, and to say farewell. At the end of the two days he was resolved: he would return to the Court, surrender his sword and spurs to the King, as a knight who had failed in his plain duty, say farewell to Lady Margaret, and set forth on a journey to the Holy Land in the humble guise of a pilgrim.

Filled with these sad and noble thoughts he travelled back to Merdun, and presented himself begging for an audience with the King, three weeks from the day on which he had gone forth against the dragon.

Now it happened that the King's messengers, who had been sent after Wilfred, had got hopelessly lost in the forest, and indeed the poor souls must have starved to death or been eaten by wild animals, for they were never heard of again. So, when Wilfred himself returned a quiver of excitement ran through the royal castle and all that might do so thronged to the Throne Room where the King was to receive the young knight. Ladies, however, were not permitted to attend, for when His Majesty was roused his language became appalling.

As Wilfred, dusty but determined, entered the Throne Room and knelt before the royal dias, the King rose with a brow of thunder, and shouted:—

“Well, young fool, don't just kneel there! Is it dead?”

“Is what dead, Your Majesty?” asked Wilfred vaguely, his eyes searching the throng around the throne for something or someone.

The King's countenance deepened in colour to a right royal purple.

“The dragon,” he said in a voice strangled with wrath, “my dragon—imbecile.”

Wilfred pulled himself together and rose from his knees.

"No, Your Majesty," he said in a loud clear voice, "it looked in excellent health when I saw it. I have failed in my —"

But the rest of his words were lost in a great cheer from the assembly, while the King rushed down the steps of the dias and seizing the astonished Wilfred in his arms kissed him on both cheeks.

"My boy," said His Majesty in joyful tones, "you are a credit to your country! A worthy son of your noble father!" waving a hand towards old Sir William, who had been standing anxiously near the throne. "An earldom for you each, at the least! A great day! A noble knight!"

It was several hours before Wilfred could escape from the Throne Room and his surprising new found fame and honours. When he did get away he went immediately, but with a heavy heart, to Lady Margaret's courtyard.

She had heard of his return and was waiting for him, standing beside the fountain in the sunlight as he had seen her first. He did not dare to look at her face, but went up and, as before, knelt at her feet.

"My Lady," he said, "I have failed you." He could say no more, but looked up sadly at her face. Then he saw in her eyes, not the coldness and disdain he expected, but a warm soft look that made his heart turn right over inside him.

"Wilfred," said Lady Margaret gently.

"Margaret," said Wilfred.

"My Knight," she said softly.

"My Love," said he.

If there is a moral to this story, it is: Do not send inexperienced young knights against dragons that are good for the tourist trade, unless you are quite sure that nobody is going to get hurt.

# JOHN O'DONOGHUE

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## WINTER

IT WAS A CHILL, NAKED SEASON. I SAT IN THE WOOD ON A DAMP AND rotting log. The baroque trees raised their lugubrious heads to the frowning sky, their twisted arms reaching out like beggar arms—grasping.

And a frigid Winter sun from which the wan light seemed to drip, losing itself in the ether, never reaching the world below.

A little breeze gently stirred my hair and sifted past, disappearing into the shady arbours of the wood. I could hear it sighing and frisking lightly.

And it seemed to me that those gentle breezes must go out over the ransacked countryside collecting the dead spirits of Summer and bringing them back to their shady graves in the wood—

Storing them up like so many precious memories.

In my mind's eye I gazed into the arbour of sad trees.

And I saw the ghost, weeping silently, of an orchard, and in the strange, wild beauty of her face I could see the saturated nettles and the tall, untame trees, surrounded with a plenitude of mysterious, long grass.

Dear Orchard, sweet forest of thought.

And the sweet, intangible smell of nostalgia permeated the whole wood. This strange smell of beauty ravished emerged, yet without emerging from the little breezes' bower and stirred the whorls of my soul.

I could see deeper into the arbour.

And it seemed that a soft, purple colour moved and existed there. The colour that is so sad, impalpable.

I saw a portrait of an old-world, young mother, a quaint widow surrounded with ivy—a profusion of still flowers.

Silence, yet a stealthy movement.

A beautiful maiden with wild, distracted tresses of gold streaming over her shoulders, her wraith-like limbs covered with a green dress touched me gently, almost imperceptibly on the shoulder.

I looked up into her eyes—I looked into the Summer skies.

And I knew she was Summer.

No warm glow filled my being from her nearness, nor from her touch. And one word hammered incessantly against my rag-ing soul:

Defeat, defeat.

If words did not exist what thoughts would I have thought? Is there a new world with new words? New thoughts?

**Defeat.**

With what licentious hands do the sadist labourers of Winter  
slaughter the happy Summer children, plucking from the bosom  
of the soil the little flowers, pink and yellow, blue and red.

And with their cruel feet do they crush the green grass under  
them—laying the meadows bare.

And strip the trees with their laughing fingers.

The maiden made a garland of rotten leaves and placed it on  
her hair. She went as quietly as she had come.

This garland, this dead thing, expressed more than I could  
ever find looking into the blue sky of Summer.

And the Winter sun disappeared. Darkness flitted through  
the gaunt wood like a silent hunter.

There emerged from behind a tree another maiden.

Her tiny, bare feet tripped soundlessly, and with a malicious  
majesty over the damp carpet of dead leaves. Raven black hair,  
with sapphire tinges burning incessantly in it, flowed madly, yet  
strangely purposefully about her.

She was shrouded in a purple cloak. She came towards me,  
and I could see the vivid lustre of her black eyes.

Winter. The rage left my soul.

She too touched me on the shoulder.

But whereas Summer, even so beautiful, had failed to give  
me a moment's warmth, she, Winter, had the power to chill me—

Chill me for all time.

## ROBERT GREACEN

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### A BIRTHDAY GREETING

THE SECOND WORLD WAR WAS OVER ; BUT EUROPE IN GENERAL HAD still to undergo an aftermath of hunger and bitterness, of refugees by the million. Ireland, North and South, had largely been spared, although the North had had its air-raids and black-out and restrictions. New endeavour was in the air; plans everywhere were being made for houses, for social reconstruction, for building again that fabric of human and material relationships which war had torn into little pieces. In a devastated continent new literary periodicals came into being to reflect a renewal of hope in life and in the arts. And, to some extent, that quickening of the spirit extended to neutral, withdrawn Ireland.

I happened to be visiting London at the time—my home then being in Dublin—and well remember being jolted through the cooking smells of Soho side-streets in a taxi, in search of a good meal, with Sean Jennett and a couple of London writers. During a lull in the conversation Jennett leaned towards me and said: “I suppose you know all about this new magazine that’s being started in Cork. The name’s *Irish Writing*. I’ve had a nice letter from David Marcus about it.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard of it or of David Marcus either,” I replied. “Well,” said Jennett, with the smile of a man who has just let one into a bit of inside information, “you will!”

These days—and I really mean since 1939 or so—nobody really wants a high-quality literary magazine at all, apart from a dedicated and lively-minded few, including would-be contributors. Of course once it is established it must be read by those who aim at being “in the swim”. But it cannot establish itself without the support of an ever-increasing body of conscientious readers who decide it is worth buying and talking about. And a reasonable number of advertisers must be persuaded to use it as a shop-window. Rising costs of paper and printing cannot so easily be passed on to the public, as the rising costs in most other trades. Furthermore, in a country like Ireland critics tend to be captious and destructive.

Now the editors of *Irish Writing*, not only writers themselves, but shrewd Corkmen both, knew these facts as well as anyone. How then have they so successfully defied the convention that a literary magazine in Ireland only lasts a few issues? Because they had faith in the quality of the writing to be found and confidence in themselves to seek it out and present it attractively. In con-

gratulating David Marcus and Terence Smith and wishing them well in their future work, let us bear in mind the words of an anonymous writer in a recent issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*:

The literary editor may or may not be a first-rate writer; what he must be is a kind of middleman with a special skill for discerning original talent, for inspiring contributors to produce their best for him, and for understanding or moulding contemporary taste.

Turning back to the first issue of *Irish Writing*, with its now yellowing pages, and Gene Martin's gay cover, showing a green Ireland in a sky-blue sea, we must note what the editors set out to do. Six years ago, then, they spoke confidently of new talents—"young and vigorous . . . advancing into the sunlight." They told us that in their new journal they would bring together work both by writers in Ireland and those of Irish descent throughout the world. To quote:

Our concern lies entirely with what is vital in Irish letters, and this we hope to give—may our symbol be the cornucopia!—in all its abounding variety. Between the many there is a link, an Irish kinship. We leave it to our readers to discern the family face.

That first issue included a number of venerable names—O'Flaherty, James Stephens, Somerville and Ross, Lord Dunsany. Among the younger poets represented were MacNeice, Sean Jеннет and Patrick Kavanagh. Teresa Deevy contributed a delicately moving one-act play, *Strange Birth*. Those two Cork writers whose names are so often linked together, O'Faolain and O'Connor were in good writing form and contributed examples of their true literary medium, the short story. L. A. G. Strong, that versatile writer—short story, novel, essay, verse grave and gay, each finds him at his ease—was there with his *Symbols, Words and Finnegans Wake*. Vivian Mercier, the youngest writer of the issue, gave us a close study of style and theme in the work of Kate O'Brien. Next to Bill Naughton's tale of a voluble Irishman in England came Myles na gCopaleen's "recorded statement" on *Drink and Time in Dublin*. A hundred and sixteen pages of vintage writing for one shilling and sixpence!

"Ah, but can it be kept up?" murmured the tribe of sceptics, reluctant to admit that it could be done even once. We now know that it was kept up. Sean O'Casey, Padraic Colum and Gogarty made debuts in No. 2, which also saw the appearance of younger writers such as Valentin Iremonger and myself. Cecil Day Lewis and the first guest writer—one Jean-Paul Sartre, darling of those who were renewing acquaintance with the Gallic spirit after the

years of war isolation—contributed to No. 3. Admittedly we had to wait until No. 11 before James Joyce was pressed into service with a previously unpublished translation into Italian of James Stephens' delightful little poem, *The Wind*.

But enough of names! Anyone who goes through the files will see that none of the "big names" is missing and that no contemporary writer of any consequence born in Ireland has failed to lend his or her weight to a magazine that has consistently aimed at presenting the best work that could be found. On one or two occasions foreign writers of distinction have been brought in. Personally, I could wish that this had happened more often, for I believe that lack of contact with the outside world is one of the chief weaknesses of Ireland to-day. There is too little awareness perhaps of the great issues and points of conflict that press so heavily on the peoples of the world.

A dissenting voice may protest that *Irish Writing* did nothing *The Bell* had not done. The difference is roughly this: *Irish Writing* is primarily a literary journal—"the magazine of contemporary Irish literature" as it is styled in the sub-title—whereas *The Bell*, since its origin, has been a documentary monthly, one which has attempted to mirror Irish life in a direct, opinionated manner. *The Bell* has certainly printed poems and short stories—and some good ones, too—but its general tone remains political, social, didactic. Its first editor, Sean O'Faolain, probably wished to exert a fairly direct influence on Irish public affairs; and the same can no doubt be said for his successor, Peadar O'Donnell.

*Irish Writing*, on the other hand, is concerned with the *essence* of Irish life and thought, with what remains when the heat and dust of current battles are largely forgotten. I make these remarks principally to dispel any illusion that *Irish Writing* has in any way tried to queer the pitch of the older established magazine. There is no conflict of interest here any more than must exist naturally by way of friendly rivalry between two serious journals in a small country, each of which does a necessary and highly specialised job.

The editorial function can be exerted in various ways. Primarily it exists to decide what should be published, to separate the grain from the chaff. And in so doing the editor gives the magazine character and tone, the impress of his own ideas, tastes and prejudices. Cyril Connolly made *Horizon* what it was—cosmopolitan, urbane, the upholder of civilised, liberal values, if a trifle self-satisfied and precious. On the other hand, *The Times Literary Supplement* maintains a high standard of fairly objective comment without being dull; only the highly discerning reader would be aware, for instance, of whether at any given time it had changed its editor or not. With such a journal there could be no abrupt change of attitude.

In *Irish Writing* the editors have displayed a modesty unusual in those who edit periodicals. Both of them publish work elsewhere, but rarely contribute to their own journal; and editorial

comment is sparing in the extreme. They are like perfect hosts who keep a good table, make their guests at home and are too busy attending to the needs of others to bother to eat or drink themselves. One could wish indeed that the editors had more to say on policy from time to time; but they perhaps feel that readers know by now what to expect and that no necessity exists for standing between reader and contributor. Having been "behind the scenes" in a number of editorial offices I know that editors sometimes try to improve the author's text—adding to and taking from—and not always with happy results. I can only say that *Irish Writing*, like all reputable journals, prints what I write, not something else. And I imagine that holds good for other writers too.

And now for some particular impressions, for the impact of a magazine—whatever the personality and drive of the editor—must depend on the sum total of individual contributions. Sean O'Casey, long the butt of adverse criticism in Ireland (primarily for political rather than aesthetic reasons, in many cases) hit back with unrestrained vigour in the second issue. In *Tender Tears for Poor O'Casey*, Sean swung his shillelagh against the hides of a number of Dublin critics. My friend, Valentin Iremonger, came in for a few resounding thwacks, before O'Casey passed on to a massacre of Gabriel Fallon, and critically to assassinate Prof. Corkery. I have seldom read an article so littered with corpses. All honour then to Sean O'Casey, armed with his shillelagh—made of Devon oak these days—wearing a rose in his buttonhole and a crown on his head, defending his dramatic reputation with rare zest against the monstrous regiment of critics! One remembers, too, that lovely thumbnail portrait of O'Casey, Denis Johnston's *Joxer in Totnes* (No. 13) in which he suggests that the importance of O'Casey to Ireland does not lie in his "problems of a questioning Catholic" or the discussion of "Are we Irish or Are we not?" or Partition or even the Irish language. To quote:

If it is anything, it is about a much wider problem . . . It concerns the world social problem that is either going to create a new social order, or is going to end us all in a holocaust of hydrogen bombs.

The pages flick by and but for the limitations of space—the writer's constant nightmare for so many years—one would dally here and there, try to re-capture a first impression, have second views or crystallise a mood . . . For a moment I shall take an issue at random—No. 5, let us say. It saw the publication of Valentine Clery's story, *She is Far from the Land*, which won the first *Irish Writing* Literary Award. As the editors remarked, Mr. Clery seemed to have learnt from Hemingway, not just to have imitated that tough, staccato style. It was surely good luck for this new writer to appear in print next to that master of the short story, Sean O'Faolain. In the same issue Donat O'Donnell wrote a per-

ceptive essay on O'Faolain, showing the various pressures in contemporary Irish life against which the serious fiction writer must work out his destiny:

Mr. O'Faolain's irascible and dissenting temperament has struggled, not without success, to preserve some honest intellectual life among his people.

Now that, as I say, was a fairly representative issue, not necessarily one of the best.

Christine Longford writing in her witty yet sympathetic manner on Maria Edgeworth; Edmund Dulac giving a highly personal impression of Yeats; a translation of Pascoli by James Joyce's brother, Stanislaus Joyce; and a tart excercise in social realism (*The Idealist*) by Frank O'Connor . . . . But the list of notable contributions is too long, and so many names clamour for inclusion. Is it possible that one day we shall have an anthology, for preference cloth-bound, in which we can find the best pieces reprinted? Let us hope so.

At this stage I need to remind myself that the present essay is not an obituary notice. *Irish Writing* has been a success, and nobody will dispute the fact. It has created a standard to live up to. It has had a distinguished past, but since it is a living, vital thing we must think primarily of its future. I can foresee the day when it will have become an institution, though I hope that when that day comes it will not cease to print new writers, young writers, even writers who go against the grain of respectable thought and orthodox practice. Conformity does not take a magazine anywhere —except to the graveyard.

MICHEÁL MAC LIAMMOIR

## CEO MEALA LA SEACA

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## JOHN EGLINTON

JOHN EGLINTON IS ALMOST A LEGENDARY FIGURE IN IRISH LETTERS, and many who have never read a line of his work are acquainted with his name. He was a friend of Yeats, Æ, George Moore, Arthur Griffith and others, in the early days of our literary revival. Moreover, he appears constantly in the inimitable, outrageous pages of *Hail and Farewell*. Quiet, studious and acute in his judgments, he impressed George Moore and, at the same time, amused him because of his earnest self-depreciation. So, when Moore came to write his comic trilogy, he put his friend into it and named him "Contrary John". Later, Mr. Eglinton appeared in the early chapters of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so found himself in a whirl of notoriety. It must have been rather embarrassing for a writer of retiring disposition, because he had already escaped, with some difficulty, from the enthusiastic attentions of W. B. Yeats, who wanted him to become a propagandist for the young literary movement. Now, at the age of eighty-four, Mr. Eglinton, who is one of the few survivors of those early days of endeavour, has been given an honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature at Dublin University. Such academic recognition is somewhat tardy, but in accepting the Degree, Mr. Eglinton has surely honoured those who have given it to him.

John Eglinton, whose real name is William Kirkpatrick Magee, is primarily a prose-writer and many have regarded him as one of the best essayists—and, for one reason or another, we have not had many essayists in this country. He has also written verse from time to time, and only a few months ago published a small collection with the embarrassing title *Confidential or Take it or Leave it*. The best of his poems are pithy and his lines achieve at times almost a proverbial ring. In a couplet such as this, a complete attitude towards literature is compressed:—

Ever, that his verse may scan,  
Must the Muse unmake the Man?

John Eglinton published his first volume in the 'nineties: a slim book with the title, *Two Essays on the Remnant*. The essays are meditative, speculative, and show the influence of Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau on the young writer. He suggests in these essays that the individual, or, to put it more clearly, the thinking man, has outgrown the state. Being more civilised than it, his only means of self-protection and self-development is to

live in philosophical seclusion. Otherwise he is liable to spend his energy in futile irritation. Those early essays are full of apt, striking phrases: for instance, an entire school of modern criticism is anticipated in the description of the poet Wordsworth as 'the first and greatest of the Unemployed.'

Had there not been new stirrings at the time, the beginning of a literary revival in this country, John Eglinton might have continued to write occasional, philosophical essays. But despite himself, he was swept towards a movement in which he did not really believe. In some recent reminiscences, he recalls, in his wry manner, the hopes and ideals of the young poets and writers who drew him into their endless arguments:

Irishmen at this time were encouraged to believe that they had one great literary advantage over other English-speaking countries—except, indeed, Wales—in the continued presence of the old language, that strange survival out of the ancient and mediaeval world. In this composite Anglo-Irish nationality scholars had brought to light, from the Irish side of the inheritance, a rich store of imaginative material, of which perhaps the most suggestive characteristic for the modern poet was the almost unique confrontation of pagan with Christian ideals; a field replete with material for drama and epic. This was the New Learning of the 'Celtic Renaissance'.

That is a fair summary of a movement, for which, by temperament, Mr. Eglinton had no liking, his own motto being that of Emerson:

Men consort in camp and town,  
But the poet is alone.

Despite his modesty and disinclination even to publish a book, Yeats and  $\mathcal{A}$  urged him to try. The little book was highly praised by some, received noisy attacks in the popular press, but failed to sell. As he tells us:—

The unsold copies were at length dumped down on my doorstep, and as I had no room on my shelves for a practically complete edition of my work, I made a bonfire of them at the end of my garden.

No doubt that is the reason why the early books of John Eglinton are so rare, so hard to come by. One of them appeared as Tower Press Booklet No. 5, edited by Seumas O'Sullivan in 1906, and its title, *Bards and Saints*, is meant to be provocative. In these essays Mr. Eglinton is no longer the recluse. He has armed himself for intellectual contest, but a contest which has not taken place as yet in this country. Indeed, at the time,  $\mathcal{A}$ , Yeats and Moore were not interested directly, as he was, in a movement purely of

thought. They were excited by imaginative visions, folk lore, legends and sagas which had been for so long neglected and even despised. Mr. Eglinton criticised and analysed the ideals of the new literary movement. As a good Unionist, both in politics and letters, he refused to believe in what we might call literary Home Rule. But curiously enough, he was one of the first to draw attention to Merriman's *Midnight Court*, which had been translated in a learned German journal. In our own time that vigorous comic poem of the eighteenth century, the last flare-up of Gaelic mockery and abandon, has been translated into English by Arland Ussher, Frank O'Connor, Lord Longford, and a fourth translation by David Marcus is to appear shortly. But it is quite possible that John Eglinton's essay on Merriman may have been ironical in its motives, for the poem is a satire on clerical celibacy.

In his attacks on the revival of the Irish language, John Eglinton showed both originality and ingenuity. He suggested, for example, that this resuscitation could not be defended by an argument from religion :

After all, it was amongst the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' —amongst those who had lost the use of the Hebrew language—that the Messiah appeared.

In some of these early essays John Eglinton may be said to have anticipated a future mood. Criticising Yeats and others who were choosing legendary and heroic themes instead of contemporary subjects, he wrote—"The poet looks too much away from himself and from his age, does not feel the facts of life enough, but seeks in art an escape from them." That was written in 1899, but how often do we not hear the same argument now? How often is not the new word 'escapism' used to condemn those who want to save from neglect and indifference the great imaginative stores of the past? The fact that so many of our younger writers turn to London or America for their literary models might seem to prove that the cause maintained by John Eglinton had won. Yet we must remember that Yeats, Æ, William Larminie, O'Grady, Sigerson were in a tiny minority. In fact, the maintenance and development of tradition require a special temperament—a very rare type of imaginative gift. Those who have not got that gift can always find arguments to justify their lack of it.

When the Treaty was signed and a Provisional Government set up here, two distinguished writers retired indignantly to England. One was the late Stephen MacKenna, who had accomplished his glowing translation of Plotinus in the midst of the Black-and-Tan uproar and diffused through Dublin that neo-Platonism which kindled the imagination of the watchful Yeats. As a constant Republican, he had refused to accept the political compromise. The other was John Eglinton, the solitary sceptic of the Irish literary movement, who, as a philosophical Unionist, was

compelled by his principles to quit his stricken native land. There was some amusement here when word came at last that the two friends had found their way to a mild, seaside resort in the south of England, where they shared their disillusion. Ever since his retirement from his official post in the National Library—and that is thirty-one years ago—Mr. Eglinton has lived in England.

But few of us can escape from the circumstances which, despite our inclinations, shape for us our destiny. So John Eglinton was unable to forget a literary movement in which he had never believed. The books which he has given us, since his retirement, are all about Irish subjects. He wrote the official biography of his friend, Æ, and it must have been a difficult task, for, he was too sceptical to share his imaginative visions and beliefs. But he accomplished that task conscientiously, with fairness and critical discretion.

In 1935 Mr. Eglinton published a volume of studies, partly biographical, entitled *Irish Literary Portraits*. These include a sketch of that excellent and neglected academic critic, Edward Dowden. It is a sympathetic one, for Dowden was temporarily opposed both to the literary and national movement here. There are also studies in this book of George Moore, Yeats and James Joyce. These essays are cool, judicious, poised. True appreciation is nicely balanced in them against critical doubt, and the writer is not deceived by the mere vagaries of fashion or intimidated by passing opinion. When I have read the latest subsidised theses on Yeats or Joyce—all part of that great new culture drive which comes to us nowadays from the rather overexcited United States of America—I find myself turning once more for refreshment to those calm, clear-minded essays.

Why did Æ, Yeats, Moore and others all want to convert their friend, "Contrary John", to their cause? I think it was because they recognised instinctively his gift, and knew that, in our country, a critic detached in his views and of independent judgment is very rare. We are left with the paradox that John Eglinton, despite his fear of entanglement, has written almost exclusively on Irish themes. Possibly there is, somewhere, a moral in all this.

*(This talk, which was broadcast recently, is published by kind permission of the Radio Eireann Authorities.)*

### SOME IRISH WRITERS WHOM I HAVE KNOWN

ALTHOUGH I THINK LITTLE OF LITERARY MOVEMENTS, BELIEVING that great work comes from an individual rather than from a limited company, yet it must be admitted that of the world's writers of this half century the number that came from Ireland is out of all proportion to the size of the country. I do not know what made this sudden flowering of genius in Ireland. It may not even have been a sudden flowering at all, but merely a harvest, and there may have been in all centuries as many singing on Irish hills as were singing when this century was young, and, for all I know, they may have been without opportunity or recognition. Indeed this is quite likely; for a singer upon the hills whose words never came to print cannot be estimated in other centuries, except by those who are in close touch with legend, which preserves the memory of such singers among a simple folk. But we grow less simple every year, and, as we read more and more, the voice of legend grows fainter and fainter in our ears. In the Irish literary harvest of the early part of this century one of the granaries was the *Shanachie*, and I remember one number containing among other good things a fine piece of prose by George Moore, and a magnificent story by Bernard Shaw. Bernard Shaw did not write many short stories; but this one, which I remember to this day, was worthy of a place among the masterpieces of Kipling, de Maupassant or O. Henry. Were I talking instead of writing I would tell this delightful story; but one cannot write another man's work.

And in those days in Dublin magazines one might come on one of the lovely poems of Padraic Colum, made of pure Irish air and the sunlight on Irish hills. Alas that he so rarely writes one of them for us now. Another granary of that harvest, as all the world knows, was the Abbey Theatre, the presiding genius of which was W. B. Yeats and the munificent patroness Miss Horniman, who deserves more thanks than she ever got. The other principal benefactress of Yeats was Lady Gregory, who was also a writer herself, and the most famous sheaf of that harvest was Synge. Of course all peoples have a view of themselves, and all artists look out each through a window of his own, so that, when one of them shows life on the Stage, it may sometimes come as a shock to those in the house to find their well-known view being regarded from another angle. And so Synge and Shaw arrived with a shock to many.

England perhaps bothers less about what she is than about what is the correct thing to do, or at any rate did so fifty years ago; but both England and Ireland were shocked, the one by Shaw and the other by Synge, and both got over it. The genius of Synge, deliberately planted by him in the Aran Isles, where it grew and flowered for its brief season, was very dissimilar from the talent of Lady Gregory. He, having got an idea, would clothe it in the language of the peasantry, and so express it. But Lady Gregory always struck me as a lady with a notebook, with which she would go into marketplaces or workhouse wards, as Florence Nightingale went into hospitals with her lamp, and there would accurately write down the actual phrases she heard, and make out of them a play. So she and Synge seemed to me to begin at opposite ends, Synge's seeming to me to be the right method; for, as the work of the architect comes before that of the bricklayer, so I believe that the primary work of the dramatist is drama, of which dialogue is merely an audible expression, whenever it expresses it at all. I do not know whence Synge got his ideas, but one of them, and one of the most dramatic, he got from Rudyard Kipling, who also had some Irish blood in his veins: it is that great moment in *Riders to the Sea* when the woman whose last son has been drowned cries out "The sea can do no more harm to me." The idea comes from Kipling's *The Gift of the Sea*, written in 1890, the second verse:

But the mother laughed at all  
 "I have lost my man in the sea  
 And the child is dead. Be still," she said.  
 "What more can you do to me."

When the shock of seeing that other eyes had looked at a familiar scene and found some difference in it had died down, a large number of writers were attracted to the Abbey Theatre, all inspired by Synge, and his influence upon them has not yet faded away. It was he more than anyone who showed at the dawning of this century that the scene of all plays need not be laid in a London drawingroom. A heroic life seemed to lure Yeats as jam tarts lure hungry children from the other side of a thick sheet of plate-glass; and, as though dissatisfied with his own quiet days in peaceful surroundings, he wrote plays of heroes and ancient wars. I still remember three lines read nearly fifty years ago with which one of these plays ended:

The years like great black oxen tread the world,  
 And God the herdsman goads them on behind,  
 And I am trodden by their passing feet.

Æ, a contemporary and friend of Yeats, but a very different man, searched for no opposites to his own life, but lived it natur-

ally, always himself. He was a prophet and wrote as a prophet, and spoke as one quite naturally. No one who saw the face of  $\mathcal{A}E$  and his inspired eyes or heard the ringing notes of his organ voice could ever have doubted that all he said was sincere. With many men I have had interesting conversations, but with  $\mathcal{A}E$  I always felt that he was prophesying unto us. And with the voice and eyes and face of a prophet he had also the generous heart of one, and not only helped, but made, some of the younger writers. That voice is lost and there will remain only his poems when the memory of the man has faded with the last of the generation that knew him, but the beautiful melody of those poems, in which is enshrined so much of the twilight on Irish hills, should be enough for posterity to know him as the greatest poet that Ireland ever produced. Alas that these poems were so few. This was the fault of my uncle, Sir Horace Plunkett, who found him in a shop, where he was doing no harm, and set him down at a desk to work for the rest of his life at a trivial journal, very useful of course and well-informed, but ridiculous when compared with the works of genius at which such a bard were better employed. As well harness a desert-wandering dromedary to a roller, which I once saw in the Canary islands far from its deserts, and always thought of afterwards whenever I saw  $\mathcal{A}E$  at his trivial work. Once a year he escaped for a month and fled to Donegal, whence he came back with some of its twilights captured with canvas and paint. It is something to have known a prophet.

Perhaps nobody boasts like a collector, because a pebble or an egg or a wrongly printed stamp are to him such treasures, according to which he collects, that he cannot help displaying them with pride and delight, though neither egg nor stamp nor pebble owe anything whatever to him. And when I was kindly invited not long ago by the Irish Literary Society to a dinner in London, and irked by the rather difficult question that I was asked as to what title I should give to what remarks I might make when the dinner was over, I was rescued from my difficulty by a sudden idea, and said that I would call my talk *Reminiscences of a Collector of Genius*. For I have had the rare luck to make a small collection of genius, my first piece collected having been Francis Ledwidge: and, knowing the speed with which he wrote and his amazing fluency, his Keats-like diction and his piercing eye, peering into the innermost of the beauties of nature, I say now what can never be proved, that I believe that had he survived the first world-war he would have been the greatest of all living poets. That can never be proved now, but at any rate, to take a very small thing, the blackbird, I can challenge anyone to find any more beautiful words written to it anywhere in the world than were written by Francis Ledwidge. When I said the speed with which he wrote, I should rather have said the speed with which he assimilated new influences. For once I gave him a book of Keats to read, and in a few days he was writing with a similar beauty,

not with any kind of imitation, but as though his genius had transmuted some rare element to another, such as platinum into gold, or gold into platinum. I will quote three of his lines that have never been published:

A large moon rose up queenly as a flower  
 Charmed by an Indian lute. An owl went by.  
 A snipe above them circled in the sky.

I know no clearer mirror reflecting Irish fields than the spirit of Francis Ledwidge.

And then there was James Stephens, that leprechaun of a man, who came into cities and saw their ways and laughed at them. I think that if a leprechaun were caught on an Irish bog, and dressed in modern clothes and taken into a city and forced to work in it by our economic conditions, his attitude towards such unwonted surroundings would be just that of James Stephens. There is so much truth in the old Roman saying that poets are born and not made, that I can hardly say that he was made by *Æ*: but, were I not bound to recognise the truth of that Latin saw. I should say that *Æ* had made him. I remember meeting him at *Æ*'s house in Rathfarnham before his first book was published, and his very natural, almost childish, delight in the anticipation of it. And I remember his first novel being rejected and *Æ* writing to say that it must be published; and *Æ*'s advice was taken. And so, sheltered by the cloak of *Æ*, he grew to his full stature, when he needed nobody's cloak to shelter him any more. Let it be remembered of James Stephens that, coming from Ireland to London without any particular sympathies for England, and happening to find himself there when the war started, he stayed there all through it, and endured there for all those years all that was endured by those that were native to London. His verses remain like the shapely lines that the waves leave on the sand, but the liveliness and charm of his conversation was like the glitter of the sun on those waves, to be missed by all who knew him.

Of all those Irish writers whom I knew and who are now dead, the most lovable was *Æ*. Bernard Shaw with his querulous postcards had the reputation of being gruff; but, as I never knew him rude to me, but always kind, I have never believed that gruffness to be any more than a pose such as those with which some poets will sometimes choose to cloak themselves. I never had a quarrel with George Moore, but many seem to have quarrelled with him, so that it might be that quarrelsomeness was no pose with George Moore. He seems to have been a Parisian by nature, and to have thought better of it when he came to live in Ireland, from which before the end London lured him away, as though he were always susceptible to the gravitational pull thrown out by a capital city. If *Æ* was most like a prophet of all men I have known, George Moore deliberately uttered one very clear prophecy.

in his *Confessions of a Young Man*, which I read during the war. He said that the increase of the population made it mathematically certain that the streets would run with blood. And he was perfectly right: they did. And I believe that the sole cause of war is that very increase. Only, George Moore had not given Europe credit for its vast powers of organization, and believed that the bloodshed which he so accurately foresaw would be a domestic concern.

And then there was Dr. Edith Somerville, whom I knew but slightly; but to write of the Ireland of the last fifty years without mentioning her and her companion Miss Martin Ross, from whom she would not allow even death to separate her, would be as blind as to tell of 17th-century Holland without mentioning Rembrandt or Cupp. For Ireland lives in their stories as bygone scenes live on in the pictures of the Old Masters.

And to this list of dead writers whom I knew I should like to add one name little known, the name of a lady who took to writing too late to make much mark in her lifetime, Mrs. Hamilton, whose autobiography, diaphanously veiled as fiction, is a very charming picture of life in Ireland. And then there was Katherine Tynan, a poet of much charm, who was one of the galaxy of poets that shone on our land in those days.

And among all these writers that I have mentioned, and among many more, Oliver Gogarty went to and fro like Mercury among the other gods, and with something of Mercury's volatile nature, cheering them with the brilliance of his conversation and chaffing them when they needed it, and every now and then writing a book, himself, either of poetry or garrulous prose, which scarcely scintillate with quite the wit of his conversation, as the reader may upon fortunate occasions judge for himself, for that wit is still luckily with us, though America seems just now to be taking more than its share.

I do not think that the poetry of today equals the work of any of these Irish poets I knew, because, worse than the magician's apprentice who stole one of his master's spells, too many modern writers have turned away from that magic arrangement of syllables that we call metre, to try to touch the hearts of men by some other means. But it cannot be done. Only the old spells have power to reach with their rhythms the hushed attention of the generations, or to hold them listening for longer than such brief period as is given to hear a new or an odd thing.

But novelists we have, of which the newest is Anne Crone; and the storytellers, of whom the most brilliant is, to my mind, Mary Lavin. And when had Ireland not storytellers?

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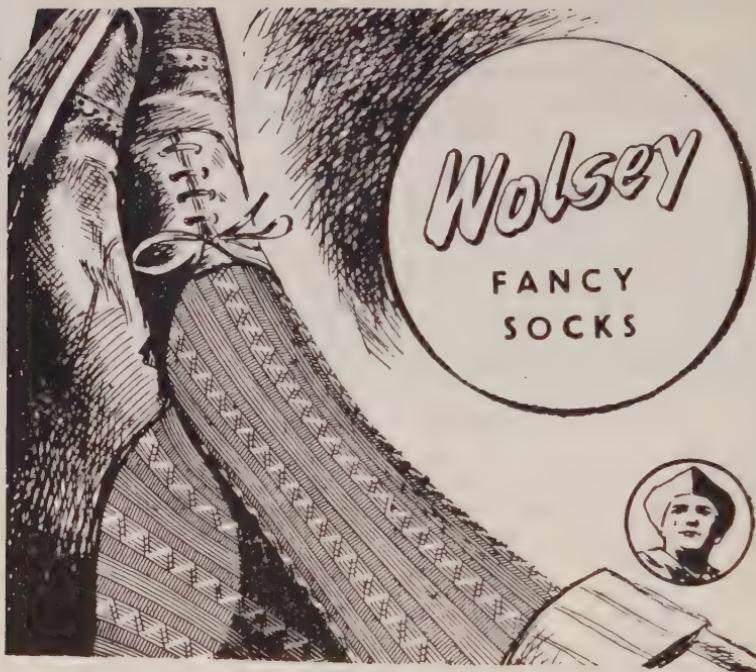
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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### SEAN AMID THE ALIEN CORN

ROSE AND CROWN, BY SEAN O'CASEY. (Macmillan, 21/-).

The title of O'Casey's latest volume of autobiography suggests that at last we might get away from Dublin. But evidently there is no escape from the pervasive influence of what for him must be—honourable exceptions apart—an unfair city. The blinkered puritanism, the bitter gunfire of failures directed on the experimental—and, in particular, the refusal of *The Silver Tassie* by the Abbey Theatre—are paraded, in all their squalid provinciality for the reader's inspection. Dreary critics—playwrights manqués—are brought forth one by one for flogging. How much wiser to have left the little fellows severely alone, un-named and short-panted, forgotten even by their own partisans!

But O'Casey would not be O'Casey if he did not hit back so hard that he frequently bloodies his own fists. We must take him for what he is or reject him; and I for one am all for accepting him as man and writer, despite his shortcomings. After all, however much one may criticise, he is a man of dramatic genius.

There are good things in *Rose and Crown* and (need I add?) a certain seasoning of wordy superfluity. One finds the well-made, original phrase:

Born into the proletariat Yeats would have made a magnificent docker.

This Baldwin is akin to De Valera. Two honest and kindly men, yet neither having in him a spark of Blake's deep-desiring vision, or Walt Whitman's expansive one of brotherhood.

The swish of a skirt in this world is more useful, more encouraging to life than the swish of an angel's wing.

So long as O'Casey sees a situation in human, deeply-felt terms he writes about it brilliantly—and there are such passages in this volume. But when he writes of abstractions he resembles an angry fly that is determined to walk across a dish of syrup. St Augustine and Aquinas will surely not suffer in anyone's esteem for being called "old boyos" and Salisbury Cathedral will remain, for all the injustices of nobles and bishops towards the common people who built it out of their sweat, one of England's great monuments of the thirteenth century.

Yet the contradictions of the man's nature are such that he speaks tenderly of Yeats and Lady Gregory, recognising in them the only aristocracy worth respecting: that of the spirit. O'Casey, too, is an aristocrat in that sense. The pages on his last meeting with Yeats in London create a vivid and moving picture of the ageing poet fighting the approach of death.

All in all, one is forced to cry "Poor Sean! 'So persecuted they the prophets . . .'" We know that in Dublin, more than in most cities, there is at work a kind of Gresham's law that tends to force out all that is best and most noble to make room for mediocrity and yes-manship. Shaw, Joyce, O'Casey in their varying ways chose exile from the city of the proud, mad Dean where "savage indignation" has lacerated so many hearts. Yet it is in and through these men that Dublin has achieved immortality. Europe honours her for having produced the author of *Ulysses* but is unimpressed by her piety. Pity rather than indignation would seem the appropriate emotion for those who denigrate their great achievements.

ROBERT GREACEN.

## PATRICIA LYNCH CYCLE

BROGEEN FOLLOWS THE MAGIC TUNE. BY PATRICIA LYNCH. (*Burke*, 10/6).

THE BOY AT THE SWINGING LANTERN. BY PATRICIA LYNCH. (*Dent*, 9/6).

TALES OF IRISH ENCHANTMENT. BY PATRICIA LYNCH. (*Clonmore & Reynolds*, 15/-).

THE LOST ISLAND, BY EILIS DILLON. (*Faber*, 10/6).

THE CHILDREN IN THE DESERT. BY BRYAN GUINNESS. (*Heinemann*, 7/6).

To those who think they know Patricia Lynch to the full here comes surprise: Brogeen we've met already (supposing my readers wise enough to let no Patricia Lynch book pass unread) but until this book, which is illustrated by Peggy Fortnum, we have not met Batt Kelly, the fiddler from Dunquin. In this character, and in the author's treatment of him, there is something quite new. First seen on the snow-swept street of Andrath this tall, black-haired man is in so bad a temper that our sympathy goes to those who have turned him out. But the kind little leprechaun, Brogeen, appears: adventures start. We watch, amid all the gaiety and laughter, the *development* of Batt. Only a born storyteller can so mix the lightness of leprechauns with something that runs very deep. I can hear others echo my thought—'the best yet'.

Leaving the world of leprechauns Patricia Lynch now tells, in *The Boy at the Swinging Lantern*, illustrated by Kiddell-Monroe, a straight tale: 'straight' because all whimsical fantasy has

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been cut out. Yet we sit back and marvel at the quiet power with which she unfolds this lovely story. Rory, aged fourteen, is leaving school. There is a mystery about him: "Rory—who?" people ask. He does not know. Bravely he sets out to solve the problem of those parents wrecked, long ago, on the 'Queen Maeve'. There is a gentleness in the telling which blends beautifully with the strong gladness of being, with the rejoicings of Rory's friends when finally those who have schemed against him are forced into the open—and are defeated.

And now, in this third book on my list, Patricia Lynch has left aside her great gift of invention. *Tales of Irish Enchantment* (so fitly named) illustrated by Fergus O'Ryan, shows the outcome of scholarship and selection. The legends and folk-tales of our own country are laid before us with that classic simplicity which makes reading a delight. The legends are in five groups: 1) The coming of the first people into Ireland, three hundred years after the Deluge. 2) The Red Branch Cycle which belongs to the time of Christ. 3) The Fenian Cycle (the third century) concerning Finn MacCool and his comrades . . . and his son who, having lived in the Land of Youth for three hundred years returns to Ireland and meets St. Patrick. 4) The Cycle of Conary Mor, begins after the Danaans have been defeated by the Milesians. And the fifth group is composed of a multitude of stories and legends of all times.

Reading these grand pages one feels the happiness with which Patricia Lynch has laboured . . . true daughter of those kings who loved to test their skill of choice and selection . . . true comrade of those hermits who gloriéd in their illuminated scripts.

*The Lost Island*, illustrated by Richard Kennedy, tells, and tells well, of a boy's adventurous search and of the friends and enemies he meets. Space forbids me from saying any more than that this book will delight many.

Bryan Guinness' well-beloved Jacqueline and Peregrine and Khalil make a fresh appearance in *The Children in the Desert*, illustrated by Roland Pym. Some of us met them five years ago. Welcome again! Their story is a smoothly flowing one, bathed in the light of the moon.

TERESA DEEVY.

1000 YEARS OF IRISH PROSE. Edited by Vivian Mercier and David H. Greene. (*Devin-Adair*, \$6.00).

The value of any Anthology depends upon two things: the quality of the material available, and the ability of the editors. In many small countries where the total material available is of indifferent merit, much would depend upon the erudition and skill of the editors. In Ireland, where the literature of almost any period is almost Elizabethan in its richness, the task demands a great sense of responsibility, and unerring intuition in the question of tradition.

At an Exhibition of pictures, I always look at the catalogue

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last, and in the case of this Anthology, it was only after I had studied the book carefully that I turned to the Introduction in the hope of discovering some key to what seemed to me a completely arbitrary juxtaposition of the Editors' selections. I found the Introduction even more puzzling than the juxtapositioning—to coin a phrase; but I did find a clue in the reference to ". . . those Cabinets or Treasuries one can still pick up at secondhand bookstores in broken sets and faded grandeur—Irish harps on the cover and blind Carolan for a frontispiece . . ." That's it! That is just what is wrong; those Cabinets and Treasuries had something that is wholly lacking in the present volume—something of tradition, something of reverence, something that gave their half-dozen or dozen volumes a lasting cohesion that is absent in this one book. This Anthology has one quality which may appeal to some, but which for me, mars all the pure gold that it contains—it is "smart". When your material is second-rate and scanty "smartness" may serve. In the case of *1,000 Years Of Irish Prose*, it is unnecessary.

While praise is due for the inclusion of Pearse's "O'Donovan Rossa" Speech, and the Proclamation of the Republic, the reasons given by the Editors for the exclusion of the Constitution are strange, to say the least of it. Unforgivable omissions are: Teresa Deevy's *The King of Spain's Daughter*, Arland Ussher, a notable contributor to contemporary thought, associated all his life with the "Revival"; and Mervyn Wall.

CECIL FFRENCH SALKELD.

PUT MONEY IN THY PURSE. BY MICHEAL MACLIAMMOIR.  
(*Methuen, 15/-*).

The making of the Orson Welles film, "Othello", in which the author plays the part of Iago, is the subject of Mr. MacLiammóir's pert and casually elegant book. Written in the form of a journal, it hies the reader—usually by air—from Dublin to Paris, on to Venice, Rome and Tuscany, thence to North Africa (the greater part of the filming was at Mogador), with sudden sallies in between from one to another of those places; slightly dizzying when to all this is added the heady bouquet of Mr. MacLiammóir's festive prose. Dominating the chronicle is the figure of Mr. Welles, whose arbitrary and mysterious comings and goings are the despair of a company disarmed by his otherwise perfect consideration and generosity. The light of picturesque comedy, everywhere evident in this book, is perhaps at its brightest when this extraordinary director is on the scene, and although in the preface Mr. Welles complains that his portrait emerges as "a rather unpalatable cocktail of Caliban, Pistol and Bottom, with an acrid whiff here and there of Coriolanus", the impression finally given is of a nature brilliantly varied, a fountain of energy and inspiration.

The book contains several fantastically comic impersonations

—monologues of which the author has always been the peculiar master, and in which the actor in him comes pleasantly to the fore, so much do they give a sense of *play* between the lines. As a travel book it is fifty times livelier than the usual one, even if sometimes it is the slightest bit tiresome to find the writer *always* so thoroughly initiated in the right things and the right ways—but that is a barbaric growl. Here, vividly, are the impressions of an alert eye, of a keen, extravagant, good-humoured and reflective mind.

T.S.

### A Message for Christmas

A Christmas card is a card with a message. The meaning of the message is told, according to our custom, in a picture and a verse. And, since Christmas is the feast of the birth of Christ, it would seem naturally to follow that the verse and picture should tell of the significance of the great mystery.

But the terrible weakness, or wickedness, or forgetfulness, or hardening of the heart that drives men to tear and destroy sacred books, to grow neglectful of sacred events, has obscured for many men, in a civilisation once Christian, the central meaning of Christmas. The drift away from Christianity has shut off men and nations from the light of the stable of Bethlehem, has left to others the humanistic or Dickensian Christmas.

In itself, the Dickensian Christmas—the stagecoaches, the holly, the mistletoe, the pudding, the jollity at Dingley Dell—is a very good thing. Chesterton said that Dickens defended Christmas not because it was historic, but because it was human. And if a man is genuinely looking for truth he will soon find, behind the Dickensian jollity, the stable at Bethlehem where poor men and kings and patient cattle knelt in peace because a child was born.

The humanistic message has, as we all know, found its way onto the Christmas cards. It is cheerful. It has the faint beginning of meaning. But it is not enough. The desirable Christmas card should concentrate on the central mystery, that was never so important, and never so neglected, as it is today, in a world that claims to be looking for peace. The words should be as simple as the words the angels spoke to the shepherds, as simple as the words the evangelists wrote down for all times and for all men. The picture should be the best that human art can do at any given time and in any given place.

These reasons, and a few others, leave the RICHARD KING Christmas cards, published by Irish Art Publications, Dublin, in a class of their own. The work of Richard King needs no introduction and no recommendation. As an artist and illustrator he has solidly established his reputation, and to send a Richard King card to a friend at Christmas time is to send a very acceptable Christmas present. Being a highly conscientious artist, he has never drawn a line or coloured a fragment of a square inch that has not its own decided meaning.

The best of his designs for Christmas cards burn with the colour of the stained glass in which he has done such notable work. And every design, accompanied with a simple verse, tells directly of the meaning of Christmas.

In the past Catholic Christmas Cards have lacked the popular appeal; they have sometimes been too pious, sometimes too liturgical and sometimes too utterly modern. These reproaches have, however, been removed, and a happy combination of Catholic thought, attractive design, superb colouring and a superlative degree of technical finish, have been achieved in the RICHARD KING cards. Send them to those you care for, this Christmas!

## ABOUT THE NEW CONTRIBUTORS

**AUSTIN CLARKE**: Born Dublin, 1896. Internationally known as one of Ireland's leading poets and critics.

**SEAN LUCY**: Born Bombay, 1931, where his parents (father a Corkman) then lived. Came home to Ireland in 1935. Now studying Arts at University College, Cork. His poetry has been in 'Poetry Ireland' but this is his first story to be published.

**JOHN O'DONOGHUE**: Born Cork, 1930. Devoted to jazz, plays trombone and piano. This is his first publication.

**ARTHUR POWER**: Born in Guernsey, brought up in Dublin. Served in 1914-18 war, worked in Paris, returned to Ireland in 1930. Has had two plays produced at the Abbey.

**K. ARNOLD PRICE**: Born Co. Mayo, spent her childhood in Co. Limerick. Has lived in France and Spain but prefers Co. Wicklow, her present abode. Has had stories and poetry published in many periodicals.

**FRANCIS STUART**: Born Australia, 1902. Spent his youth in Ireland. Lived in Germany during World War II. Has had two plays at the Abbey and published many novels which have been widely praised.

**GORDON WHARTON**: A young Irish poet who lives in London where he and Patrick Galvin have just launched a new 'little review' called Chanticleer'. His first poems appeared in 'Poetry Ireland'.

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